# IMPERIAL DEFENCE

LIEUT-COL. E. S. MAY.

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# IMPERIAL DEFENCE

# Principles and Problems of Imperial Defence

BY

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# INTRODUCTION

I HAVE been induced to write the following pages by some, probably most partial, friends, who have assured me that they would help the study of Imperial defence. It was with considerable hesitation and reluctance that I acceded to such representations, because I felt that I should have to refer to many topics which could be better dealt with by a sailor. On the other hand, lay the argument that the part our army must play in world warfare was sometimes underrated, and that, though secondary to the navy, its efficiency was still an essential element in the force which secured our safety or existence. Imperial defence, although it cannot be carried out at all without a navy, cannot be accomplished by a navy alone; and, the two services being complementary to one another, it seemed not illogical to endeavour to view them in combination and lay stress on the correlation that exists between them. But that all the armed forces we possess should be regarded as a whole was a view I had long held; and such being my opinion, I had the less difficulty in persuading myself to write. In addition, an even more powerful motive actuated me. A constant examination of the history of past campaigns had impressed on me the value of a habit of examining war, and the preparation for war, from the business point of view. A continual search for the causes that lay at the root of success or failure had established the fact that, whereas the glowing pages of military history often attribute victory to the personal courage

or readiness of individuals, triumphs have most frequently been arranged for at the desk.

From immemorial ages poets have glorified the warrior; painters and sculptors have exhausted their imaginations in the effort to idealise and exalt the actions of the heroes whose names they have sought to perpetuate. Even Religion has not withheld the promise of spiritual advantage to the resolute fighter. Fanaticism, patriotism, ambition, greed, even fear, are in turn invoked to nerve men to the sticking-point. Ardent rhetoric and glowing colours, storied stones and imperishable verse, each in turn are made to appeal to the pride or vanity of great or little men. To hide the hideousness of war, or warm the chill virtue of self-abnegation, every device has to be resorted to. Therefore we find the great leaders of all ages entering, as it were, into the conspiracy, still further inflaming popular imagination, and appealing rather to the emotions than to the reason of those whom they command. Generals and admirals, artists, poets, and politicians, are all thus joined together in diverting attention from the prosaic side of war; while the experiences of savage warfare, where something of the old chivalry still lingers and the personal factor has still a considerable share in influencing the combat, assist to give a false idea of what a great struggle in modern times will involve.

To the people of England a great war would mean more than it would in the case of any other nation. Almost every transaction of daily life would be upset. Every cottager would have to adjust his means to vastly altered conditions. An ever-increasing pressure would be imposed on the resources of our working-people during every month that hostilities went on. On the Continent it is true that nations in arms would face one another, but in our case the healths

and lives of wives and children, as well as those of husbands and brothers in the ranks, would be involved. Because food, not for the armies only but also for the inhabitants of our country, would have to be provided. When the effects of war make themselves keenly felt in every village, errors and miscalculations have far-reaching consequences and are not readily condoned. Much more than the military reputations of individuals or the lives of fighting men are at stake. Mismanagement will be resented, as any other mismanagement that costs lives on a large scale is resented and condemned in civil life.

In short, the conduct of war is, or should be, made a business transaction. The healths and lives of his men represent the capital of a general. He cannot reckon on unlimited funds: he must exercise economy, and utilise what he has to the best purpose. The force that can be provided by the country is limited, and it must be made to go as far as possible. Apathy in peace, and panic in war, are the dangers that have to be avoided; and of these the former is perhaps less dangerous than the latter,—panic, the child of forgetfulness and the mother of waste, which calls ruinous prodigality into being to destroy what careful economy has painfully succeeded in building up, which endeavours in a week to make good the omissions of a decade, and sees the edifice reared by strenuous exertion crumble away when just completed and just ready for use.

We have recently witnessed a most salient example of what spasmodic effort can accomplish, and we have been surprised by the warlike vigour which the country has shown. Yet the army and its administration has met with the most severe criticism, because it was felt that the exertions made during the war exhibited energy rather than skill, and zeal rather than wisdom.

And now, no doubt, it is to be feared that when the skies have cleared, the uproar will die away. When the rains are over, many reputable rivers in South Africa disappear. Innumerable grains of sand have waylaid and obstructed the thin trickle of the failing stream. Split into millions of tiny drops, the mighty volume of the great watercourse has finally become obliterated amid the infinity of the little particles; and you may walk across the dry sands of a river-bed incredulous that water can for years have flowed there. Yet if you dig a little way below the surface you will perhaps find forms of aquatic life; it may be that there are even fish; just as amid inimical conditions spirit and vigour may survive. When the inevitable storms break in due season, a raging torrent will again appear rolling millions of gallons of water in wanton prodigality to the sea. It is possible to rescue those wasted waters, to dam and save, to cut channels judiciously and irrigate,—the generosity of one season being called to redress the parsimony of another; the same quantity of water making a whole countryside green, where now a narrow band of verdure alone marks the course of the wayward stream. Energy, imagination, and forethought, as well as water, are sometimes smothered and lost amid the illimitable little worries and obstructions of routine. Thousands will come forward at moments of national danger to swell the wild surges of unorganised force. Then the tumult, short-lived as it is violent, will subside, leaving no permanent trace of its volume or even of its existence behind.

To legislate to make the most of what we have, to employ it so that it may be productive and remunerative in the future, should be our aim; so that we can obtain men without a panic, as it is possible to obtain water without a flood. These are

the true lessons of the war. We have fought in an abnormal country against an abnormal foe. We have, perhaps, learnt how to act in that particular region and against that particular enemy. We know his strength and his weakness, and we can gauge our chances against him. But tactics vary with the circumstances of the moment, with the character of the enemy, with the armament on both sides, and, above all, with the ground. While certain very valuable lights have been thrown on technical matters, on the manufacture, pattern, and durability of equipment, on the effect of fire both of infantry and artillery, and, to some extent, on formations, the value of our deductions is not absolute but relative. Against an European foe we might find South African formations fail, and we know that they would not be adopted against a savage enemy. But the lessons we have gleaned as to the warlike spirit that still inspires our fellow-citizens, the vital necessity for trustworthy intelligence, for preparation, for method, are applicable to every period and to every war. The great truths of strategy have again asserted their immutable and inexorable force. Politics and strategy should go hand-in-hand. The plan of campaign should be adapted not only to the force of the enemy, but to that with which we can take the field. The security of lines of communication, the danger of an open base—these are absolute lessons, and no matter where we may next fight we shall infringe them at our peril. But beyond them we have been given lessons equally absolute, more original, and, for us, even more important. The need for cultivating, not only the intelligence but the characters of both officers and men, the inculcation of soldierly virtues, self-reliance, determination, discipline, patience—what may be termed the moral qualities of a good soldier, these must not be left out of sight. And we have learnt the

importance of training for war, not for any particular nature of warfare, but for war generally — principles and not rules, manœuvre and not drill, military instinct and not pedantry. Most of all, when Imperial defence is considered, have we learnt the value of Colonial assistance, and the undeveloped possibilities that lie before our Colonies. Yet, on the subject of the training of our Colonial forces, or even of their place in Imperial defence, I have said but little. As regards the latter I have, in the chapter on organisation, given the reasons which have kept me silent; as regards the former much might be said, but it is not my place to say it. The training of our Colonial troops for war is in the hands of competent men, who will do whatever is needed, and are now doing it. To my comrades of the Colonies, or to those of them who may perhaps imagine that spontaneous and individual efforts are of more value in war than any that bear the imprimatur of official sanction, I may, however, say that when we next fight shoulder to shoulder it will help us if we completely understand one another's methods and ideas. All soldiers under one flag should speak the same tactical language. The broad methods of every man succeeding to leadership should be the same; thus shall the system flourish when the individual passes away, the chances of error diminish, the rubs of friction be reduced to vanishing-point. And if intelligent and genial co-operation be demanded on the battlefield, how much more are they to be sought and secured when land and sea forces join against a common danger?

The co-operation of the services is, indeed, the corner-stone of Imperial defence; co-operation, above all, in the council chamber. It can be readily learnt in actual practice. We have had some experience, and the results have been encouraging; but far-

reaching and not quickly to be amended are the misunderstandings of great principles. Co-operation in conception is more important even than in execution, and in weighing the relative importance of naval and military needs it is the fate of the nation which is often swinging in the balance.

EDWARD S. MAY.

DURLEY HOUSE, CAMBERLEY,
*1st November* 1902.

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# IMPERIAL DEFENCE

## CHAPTER I

### FOUNDATIONS OF EMPIRE

THAT the basis of our Empire is sea-power, and that the first essential to Imperial defence is command of the sea, it is happily no longer necessary to demonstrate. I may assume that the writings of Captain Mahan, Sir George Clarke, Mr Thursfield, the late Admiral Colomb, and the many others who have laboured to bring this fundamental principle home to our minds have not been in vain, and that a condition of things which twenty years ago might have required proof may now be received as a postulate which will be accepted by sailors and soldiers without demur. A broad conception of Imperial defence will, however, embrace in its purview other factors besides the military efficiency of the navy. It will recognise the economical and political problems which a great war brings with it, and will not allow us to rest satisfied and free from anxiety because we can boast of a navy, even though we may have wisely rendered that navy supreme.

Our Empire is primarily a commercial organism. It was individual effort and private enterprise that built its foundations, and our Government has usually followed, often hesitatingly and anxiously, where its citizens have led the way fearlessly, and vigorously, and wisely. Gordon, left to perish at Khartoum spoke truly when he said that England had been made great by her

adventurers. We owe India to Clive, who went there as a writer in a commercial office. Canada was drawn to us through the vigour of the trading company which first found a footing in its huge territories. The genesis of our greatness was a commercial one, and the needs of our people, the industry and enterprise that sought to satisfy them, not the impulse of official direction, first started and then kept up our progress towards the wide empire which is ours.

That such has been the origin of our greatness is the surest guarantee for its stability. It is sometimes said to our disparagement that the vast edifice has been thrown together at hap-hazard and piled up by good fortune rather than by scientific foresight; but while it is true that the official in our case has followed the trader and the merchant, it is possible that we find here the outcome of a wise instinct rather than the gift of mere good fortune. The official did not appear till he was really wanted, and was called forth by the force of circumstances. The commercial knowledge of the trader understood where his true interests lay, and the Government either did not think about him at all or let him choose for himself. That is a sounder method of colonising than for the Government to select the site and then leave the trader to make what he can of it. The advantages are those of natural as opposed to artificial selection.

It is necessary at the outset of the study of Imperial defence thus to reiterate the story of our Empire, to remember this commercial substratum, which underlies the bristling strength we see before our eyes. All warfare hinges on questions of communications. Strategy by sea and land alike asserts the power of the same inexorable laws. But Imperial defence is governed by special strategical laws of its own in addition to those of universal application, because the communications

we there deal with must be guarded not only for military but for commercial reasons; because an Empire which is built on a commercial basis must stand or fall with its commerce, and our commerce depends on communications over sea.

Again, if our Empire depend on sea-power on what does sea-power itself depend? What called the ships and fleets into existence? Did the merchant shipping precede the battleships, or were the latter provided to safeguard and foster the former? It is but another form of the question, Was the expansion of the Empire deliberately planned and controlled in a Government bureau, or did a natural tendency to increase call the bureau and the officials into existence? We shall all have a ready answer to the latter question, but it is perhaps less widely recognised that sea-power grew from, and now is largely supported by that "Great Shipping" which the Elizabethan adventurers held to be the most valuable outcome of long, arduous voyages to the outlying quarters of the globe. They held that large view, because they realised that facility of communication was essential to intercourse, and that naval aptitude was necessary to us if we wished to secure a means of transport which was the best of the time. The broad ocean constitutes one vast open highway; and transport was formerly, and is sometimes still, far more cheaply and securely carried out by water than on land. Waterways can still compete even with railways, but up to the end of the eighteenth century the advantages they possessed over roadways, even in the most civilised countries in Europe, were altogether preponderating. The canals of Holland provided unrivalled facilities for the carriage of merchandise, and were formerly as necessary to her cities and industries as are railways now.

During his campaigns in Bohemia the waters of the

Elbe furnished Frederick with his most valuable line of supply.

At the beginning of the last century travellers across Ireland were towed by galloping horses from one side of the island to the other along the Grand Canal, with greater comfort and more expeditiously than they could travel by coach. Nor is water transport at the present day of anything but high importance.

In January 1902 the French Chambers voted the huge sum of 600,000,000 francs, with what was reported by the correspondent of the *Times* "as almost feverish haste," for the construction, repair, and improvement of the canals and waterways of the country, and of her military and commercial ports. 443,500,000 francs of this total are to be spent on new canals—a fact which is eloquent as to the importance which still attaches to waterways, even in a country so closely intersected with railways as is France.

In countries where canals and navigable rivers did not exist waterways ran round the shore, and in such cases war with a naval power not only threatened foreign trade, but (to use an Irishism) the chief internal means of communication became likewise insecure. The convoys that carried the imports to such countries had likewise to distribute them after arrival, and ships crept furtively from headland to headland anxiously scanning the offing for signs of the ship-of-prey that might be on the lookout for them. Under such circumstances the internal as well as the foreign trade of countries, situated so near to one another as France and England, demanded protection, and the value of sea-power was brought home to every little grocer in a country town.

But when the wealth and enterprise of a flourishing nation expanded, greater scope for its commercial activities were demanded, and the argosies of great

mercantile houses sought the ends of the world in search of gain. Harbours where water, vegetables, and fresh meat might be embarked became necessary; refuges where ships might refit or find shelter along the paths that led to and from the markets which supplied their cargoes were demanded. Soon the trading-station itself called for secure protection; the stores where merchandise of all kinds was accumulated, the coffers of the counting-houses, the shops, the dwelling-houses of the little colony, could not be left open to the raids of the lawless tribes of the country. The favour and patronage of a semi-civilised potentate, whose policy perhaps neither reflected nor moulded the views of his subjects, was often an uncertain element to reckon on. While the inroad of robbers had to be guarded against on shore, the sea had to be watched for the visit of a hostile warship.

Thus the defences of Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta had their beginnings in the defensible factories or trading-stations of a mercantile company. The castle at Capetown, and Fort William at Calcutta, were built by Dutch and English with the same objects in view.

The more business increased and thrived, the larger was the bait offered to treacherous greed or avowed hostility. Until the rich harvest was seen collected and piled together, the full value of a concession had perhaps been scarcely realised. The varied produce of a country exhibited in concentrated form, garnered and heaped together by the energy of traders in one spot, might well glow with so broad a beam as to attract from afar foreign enemies too. The lawlessness of individuals, the greed of the ruler, or the jealousy of rival nations might all be found eager to deprive industry of its reward.

A few loopholes and barricades soon developed into counterscarps and curtains, a garrison was quickly

called for, and the flag of the mother-country was speedily waving over a fort that grew to be of national importance, and an outpost of the Empire, which both our interest and pride compelled us to defend, was established. Warlike stores and ammunition and reinforcements were soon crowding the peaceful paths of trade. The warships that were sent to escort them needed bases of supply and refitment and harbours in their voyages to and fro. When many and richly-laden vessels were constantly traversing wide and lonely stretches of the ocean at periods less civilised than ours, piracy and lawlessness on the sea were to be feared, and soon the heavily-burthened merchantmen had more than the forces of the elements to dread.

The demand for such ports of call as Mauritius, Capetown, and St Helena therefore became urgent, not only for the accommodation of warships, but for the convenience and safety of a mercantile marine, and the health and comfort of the passengers it carried. The evolution of what we now term a naval base or defended harbour had been begun.

It is true, of course, that nations which sent forth their navies with an aggressive policy in view, which territorial aggrandisement, not commerce, impelled to cross the sea, similarly needed ports for supply and refitment; but in the case of England commerce was the germinating power that called our many resting-places on the waters into existence. The strongholds at the ends of the line, the shelters and supply ports that form the chain of connection with the mother-country, were supported by sea-power, and the security of communication, which was vital to commerce, could only be established by the mastery of the waves.

But special circumstances favoured England more than any other nation in the creation and development of sea-power. In the first place, she was an

island, and had a maximum of seaboard, where a seafaring population might thrive and live upon the industries which are associated with the element that surrounded them. A race of fishermen and sailors was reared, familiar from boyhood with all that belongs to shipping, bred up to seamanship, and knowing no other means of livelihood. In other countries the presence of a land frontier provoked anxiety, and necessitated the training and upkeep of a powerful land force. The soldier's calling there became a trade. But England's whole energies and thoughts could be concentrated on the acquisition and development of maritime advantage alone. It was across the seas that her young men looked when visions of wealth or adventure stirred their minds. Young Raleigh, brooding by the shore, saw Eldorados below the offing, and the road to glory and power behind the sun. To an Elizabethan boy every dream of conquest contained a ship; his ambition was to be a sailor, his idea of a battle was a sea-fight.

Our extensive seaboard, however, gave us more than singleness of purpose and immunity from counter-attack. The geographical formation of our southern coasts, those from whence expeditions across the ocean would most naturally emerge, provided us with excellent harbours and sheltered roadsteads. Nor was our strategical position a less favourable one. On the flanks of the great trade routes up the Channel lay our strongholds. The ships of Russia, Denmark, Holland, and Sweden, before they could cast anchor in their own waters, must run the gauntlet of our fleets in harbour. Our best ports were those which confronted foreign shores. Spain and Denmark and Italy, with such a coast-line as makes them all but islands, have each their heel of Achilles, and have all been struck in their most vulnerable point. The long seaboard of France is spread from the Mediterranean

to the Atlantic and the Channel, but is divided by Spain and by Gibraltar. Spain herself, with a magnificent seaboard, is similarly broken up, while frost hampers Russia in one direction and the narrows of the Bosporus in another.

A compact position, with facilities such as we have for training and manning fleets, is a priceless possession.

The geographical conformation of Italy may at first sight appear calculated to give her the same advantages in the Mediterranean that we enjoy in the North. The Mediterranean is the great trade route between East and West, and in the old world has always occupied the position the Caribbean Sea may one day fill in the new. Past the southern shores of Italy the great commerce of the world has flowed for centuries; at Venice and Genoa, on her northern shores, the richest coffers and storehouses of the Levant were emptied out. But owing to the nature of the country, the lateral communications between Italian ports run along the coast, and are singularly open to attack. Her position, to borrow a phrase from tactical studies on shore, is not sufficiently *deep*. Again, the possession of Corsica by France, and of Malta by ourselves, constitutes an eternal menace to her, and the approaches to her harbours are flanked by foreign Powers, as our ports flank the trade routes to the North Sea and the Baltic.

Buckle traced the history of civilisation and growth of a people's characteristics to climate, the influence of mighty hills and other natural features. It is in no fanciful spirit that the development of sea-power has been similarly attributed to the physical conditions under which nations have grown to manhood. The unfruitfulness of the soil, the rigour of climate which is inimicable to the agriculturist, may drive men from the fields to find food and a means of livelihood on the sea. When the mother-country could not supply their neces-

sities, men were spurred to seek them beyond the borders of the realm. The prodigality of nature in one region was called on to redress her inhospitality in another.

The wine and varied agricultural products of France satisfied the needs of a population whose frugality was not to be matched in other countries. The warm climate of southern Europe did not call for the heating and expensive foods on which life depended in the more rigorous North. A Neapolitan might spend a happy day basking in the sun, and warming himself for nothing; the polenta, or maccaroni, which sustained him, cost him little more. Only rich men could be comfortable farther North. Cold and hunger stimulated the northern races to an active life. The raw winds and bleak pastures of our islands pampered their children but little, their energetic dispositions and ambition demanded more than nature gave, and in foreign adventure they sought the riches through which comfort in a climate such as theirs was alone to be obtained. Less eager spirits stayed at home to learn a trade and earn wages with which they might purchase the necessaries of life. The adventurers abroad sent back raw material to their brethren at home, who in turn manufactured it, and, when they had satisfied their wants, sent the superfluity away again to the markets of the world.

The palaces of Venice were raised on mud and slime. The energy which nature gave the Venetians was a gift more valuable than miles of fertile soil, and it was all they can be said to have received. Holland,* which among the present nations of the world has received least from nature, owed her prosperity to the same harshness that had driven our people far afield, and had

* Such is a theory as to growth of sea-power in Holland which the pages of Captain Mahan's great book, "The Influence of Sea-Power on History," have inculcated.

compelled the Venetians to lead a strenuous existence. The poverty of the soil compelled the dwellers in the Netherlands to look for food in the sea. Fishermen who caught more than they could eat soon developed into traders, and a seafaring population offered a wide recruiting-ground to a navy. Situated between France, and the Baltic, and the great waterways of Germany, Holland naturally absorbed much of the carrying trade of Europe, and her growth, corresponding with the withering of the commercial Italian Republics, soon spread, until she overshadowed Venice and Genoa, and absorbed the trade of the Levant. The carrying trade of the mercantile world, as it then existed, gradually fell more and more into her hands, until, in the earlier half of the seventeenth century, she occupied the same position in relation to the world's commerce that we have so long enjoyed.

We may add other factors in the growth of sea-power to these, however, and one which we must not overlook is the influence of race and tradition.

It was the seductive shores of the Eastern Mediterranean which produced the enterprising mariners and self-denying colonists who first explored every creek and headland of the seas known to the ancients. From Tyre and Sidon, merchants bearing the rudiments of culture and art and science amongst their costly bales, penetrated to the most distant shores. And where they landed, the factory, as our adventurers would have called it, made its appearance, and a trade was set on foot. If Holland was rescued from the waves by patient industry, and was too poor and small to feed her population, the country that gave birth to the Phœnicians was more insignificant still. Their proper home on the Syrian coast was only some thirty miles long, and not more than one mile wide,* and, even with its

* "Carthage and the Carthaginians," by Bosworth Smith.

immediate settlements added on, made but a marvellously small cradle for the rearing of so great a race. Carthage owed her first origin to one of the same commercial factories that these Phœnicians had dotted round the coasts, but the energetic and warlike race which founded that city was not content to settle down and enjoy in quiet the acquisition gained. Each added strip of territory was but a foothold for a further spring, the gathering of new wealth only provided capital for greater ventures. As with the Jews, so with the Phœnicians, a marked individuality and character remained everywhere with the race. The presence of Phœnicians implied progress; what its children put their hands to prospered. In the general scramble for wealth which took place among the tribes dwelling on the borders of the Mediterranean, the enterprise and intelligence of the Phœnicians enabled them to emerge foremost, and grow so strong, that for a hundred years they contested the empire of the world with the greatest power of antiquity. Race here owed something, no doubt, to circumstances and opportunity, but itself supplied the touch of sacred fire that compelled success, when the face of fate seemed set against it.

The courage and patient industry of the Flemings, too, left its traces in the Netherlands. A Huguenot strain asserted its worth in our own islands, and in South Africa.

There were, however, other islands and other swamps besides England and the Low Countries, other regions with great seaboards and deep harbours, whose sons have not embraced seafaring life, as did the inhabitants of the Batavian marshes. The Celts of Ireland received as little from Providence as did the men of Devon or the Dutch. They did not interpret the lesson in the same way, and even to this day the wealth of Irish fisheries is largely exploited by the energies of foreigners, not by that of the Irish themselves.

On the other hand, the Danes and Norsemen who invaded England brought with them the vigour and enterprise of their race. The strain of the sea-rovers which was thus introduced, mingled well with the patient and industrious Saxon blood, and gave fire and quickness to more solid qualities. The Norman or Saxon strain of Raleigh and Drake and Howard had that stiffening which turns to practical account the imagination of the Celt, and if we owe much to Providence which gave us the seaboard, much to adversity which compelled us to make full use of it, we owe something also to that adventurous spirit which even the remote descendants of the invading Normans have shown that they still possess.

But whether they were the outcome of a congenital instinct, or the result of religion, or of circumstances, it is certain that the rise and progress of the Dutch Republics bears a marked similarity to that of our own country. At the height of her prosperity it has been said that Holland could only feed one-eighth of her population.* The remainder had to trust to foreign aid. Holland depended, therefore, as absolutely as we do through her sea-power on her commerce, and when the disastrous war with England from 1653-54 put an end to her shipping she had to accept a humiliating peace in order that her very existence might be saved.

The weakness of a country that depends on foreign resources is here writ large. As Holland must have perished, so must we perish when our commercial prosperity is destroyed. Her prosperity at home depended, as ours now depends, on the maintenance of power beyond the confines of a narrow territory. It is not only a matter of food, as some seem to

* "The Influence of Sea-Power on History," by Captain Mahan, p. 37.

think, but a matter of wages too. The sea-power of England in Cromwell's time could not reach the land frontiers of Holland. Starvation could have been staved off by means of traffic on land, when the supply of food from over sea was cut. But the wages of her artisans and mechanics, as of ours, were dependent on trade from abroad, and when that foreign trade was destroyed her industries languished and her labouring population was ruined effectually, because the means of supporting wives and children were taken from her.

The prosperity of Holland and that of England were both the artificial products of an accidental combination of circumstances demanding extraneous support, and now, as in the past, the greater the prosperity the more abnormal will the conditions of life become, the more open to interference, and the more vulnerable to the buffets of misfortune.

It is necessary to constantly insist on the commercial basis on which our sea-power and Empire rests, for the fact is often overlooked, and while much anxiety is spent upon the question of our food supply we hear comparatively little of the danger a want of raw material will bring with it.

Moreover, while the Empire rests on commerce, her navy is supported by the mercantile marine.

The support which cargo-shipping has given, both directly and indirectly, to our fleets of warships is manifested, moreover, in the reserve power which a large seafaring population affords to a navy. Speaking within certain limitations, it is the characteristics of a people rather than their numbers which make them formidable. The quality of the potential recruits is more important than their quantity. The population of France at the end of the revolutionary wars was bigger than that of England; but greater difficulty was

experienced in manning the French than the English fleet, because France had a smaller mercantile marine, and fewer families who lived on what the sea brought them. Not only fewer seamen, but fewer of the artificers and artisans who are occupied in providing all the adjuncts that shipping demands. The special manufactures that filled many a marine store in an English seaport did not exist to anything like the same extent across the Channel. Even if the ships could be as rapidly and as well built as ours, which was indeed the case, their final equipment, and the refitment of others that had been already at sea, constituted a drain on the resources of France that she could not meet with the elasticity that belonged to us, her rivals. There was less behind her fighting line than there was behind that of England, less naval resources in the country both as regards personnel and material.

To some it may appear that such a reserve of strength and talent, if it can be called so, in a country is not of the same importance now as heretofore, because modern wars are supposed to be of such short duration that the issues will be decided soon after the first battles are joined, that there will be no time to recuperate, that we must win immediately or go under without hope. I think we heard more of the short duration of modern campaigns before the war in South Africa broke out than we have since or are likely to hear in the future.

The wars which in modern times have ended rapidly have evidenced the presence of careful preparation and organisation for war in peace-time rather than the deadliness of weapons. It was not superlative tactics, not the precision of their armament, not the impetus of their attack, that enabled the Germans to dispose of the French main armies between the beginning and end of August 1870. Four years earlier good organisa-

tion, careful training, and able strategy had been behind the needle gun. The possession of the advantage which a breechloader conferred undoubtedly weighed down the scales against Austria, but the adoption of such a weapon was none the less due to the same wise forethought and thorough system of preparation which ensured the German successes in both their great wars before ever a shot was fired.

War waged intelligently has been swift and remorseless before Moltke or Bismarck were heard of. Could modern weapons have made the campaigns of Austerlitz or of Jena more rapid or decisive, or have retarded the catastrophe of 1815?

Have we any sure ground for supposing that war on the sea will in respect of rapidity differ widely from what we are taught by history to expect? There will be great and sudden catastrophes. What represents a vast sum of money will be swallowed up when the waves close over a battleship, but, while information and knowledge is as widely diffused as at present, navies will be built much on the same lines. The advantage will scarcely always be with one side, and, to put it at the lowest, need not always be against us. One defeat, or even one campaign, will scarcely be enough to give us our *coup-de-grace*; while if it do not, then reserves of shipbuilders, mechanics, engineers, marine stores, and war material, in addition to merchant ships and merchant sailors themselves, cannot fail to make their value felt in the future as in the past.

Money, and all that money can provide, must always prove the sinews of war. To hold out a little longer is what in an emergency has often turned the scale, and not seldom when a leader has thought himself beaten his opponent has acknowledged him victorious.

In the dark days of the South African war just ended many at home must have recalled the bitter words of De Witt, quoted by Captain Mahan, to illustrate the tale of the decline of Holland. "Never in time of peace, and from fear of a rupture, will they (the Dutch) take resolutions strong enough to lead them to pecuniary sacrifices beforehand. The character of the Dutch is such that, unless danger stares them in the face, they are indisposed to lay out money in their own defence. I have to do with a people who, liberal to profusion when they ought to economise, are often sparing to avarice when they ought to spend." In changing their clime the Dutch have, it would seem, belied the old proverb, and have changed their character too.

It is pertinent for us also to remember that a sea-power which has been called into existence by commerce, and has, in turn, become necessary to an empire which rests on the same basis, has a more beneficent influence, a more humane mission, than any other manifestation of military force. A sea-power which exists to promote exchange and barter does not only enrich one class of the community, but the country which possesses it, as well. It likewise "blesses him that gives, and him that takes." The demand for certain commodities, and the possibility of satisfying the demand, creates an industry which is occupied in the production of what is needed. Trade benefits two sets of persons, those who buy what they want, and those who sell what they do not require. The empire which sends its fleets to distant peoples, bearing in them the gift of trade, is therefore essentially a civilising and beneficent power; and, resting as it does on the interests it calls into being and develops, is planted on a broader base, has deeper foundations, than one which is the creation of autocratic influence, and strives to satisfy a greed and rapacity

which are purely selfish, and return nothing in the way of exchange. Wars of conquest undertaken, whether by sea or land, in the wantonness of personal pride, to satiate ambition, or to enhance the dignity of an individual or of his dynasty, bring no increased comfort to the people who are expected to glow with admiration at the tale of glory. Did the people of France enjoy greater personal comfort or happiness after the victories of Louis XIV., or of Napoleon than they did after the defeats of Waterloo or Gravelotte? Did the British farmer find his lot brighten when Marlborough won Blenheim and the trophies of Dettingen were carried home? When Frederick added Silesia to his dominions did the golden age seem to the Prussian peasantry to have suddenly begun? Surely not. The big grenadiers marched and counter-marched, Seydlitz and Ziethen wheeled and charged, labours unexampled were crowned with bays of an immortal growth; but in many a lonely countryside the ploughman cut his furrow and ate his frugal meal, and very likely never knew that war was going on at all, died all ignorant of Rossbach, and unillumined by the glories of the Great King.

Swift wrote truly when he said that whoever could make two ears of corn, or two blades of grass, to grow upon a spot of ground where only one grew before, would deserve better of mankind, and do more essential service to his country, than the whole race of politicians put together. Infinitely more he might have added. than those who in pursuit of glory carried on aggressive war, sowing thereby the seeds of future strife, and future poverty, and often failing to reap substantial harvests, even in their own lifetime, by their dearly-bought victories.

It was the original character of our foreign expeditions, this absence of set purpose in aggrandisement, that has made our colonisation successful, and which

differentiates it from that of Spain. We took away, but we brought something in return, supplied and created a market at one and the same moment. Our factories were fed from abroad, and, in return, satisfied the needs of foreigners too. Thus a mercantile marine, and a carrying trade were called into being, new industries were created such as gave wages and employment to the population who could not find them on the farmlands of a restricted country. Riches acquired through the commerce established by colonisation were well earned by patience and parsimony, were appreciated because they were the prize of self-denial and industry. The qualities which made men succeed in their acquisition appealed to the moral sense of others. Great merchants in England were respected, not despised. The aristocracy of Holland, and of the great trading cities of Europe, was a commercial aristocracy, but still a proud one, proud of its achievements, of its integrity, of its position won by hard work and shrewd good sense. The hatchments of such great families loom as impressively through the misty aisles of many a mediæval church or cathedral, where we may see them hanging still, as do the tombs of warlike princes, political churchmen, or mighty men-at-arms. In our own country the great merchants and bankers have merged into the nobility, until a financial has become as distinguished as a feudal pedigree, and the two are not seldom found combined.

Gold and precious stones acquired and hoarded merely for the pride of their possession do not ameliorate the lot of a poor people, and do not reduplicate their influence. The treasure of an Indian Maharajah may amount to millions, but while it is lying hidden beneath the floor of an inner chamber of the palace, his people may be starving, and it is not benefiting him. Examples of such senseless hoarding

were to be found not many years ago. The wealth extracted by Spain and Portugal from the mines of South America, if not thus stupidly rendered profitless, was almost as criminally wasted when dissipated in reckless profusion, and with no desire to make the expenditure useful or remunerative.

The sight of sudden wealth arrived at without patient labour, or prolonged self-denial, was, and is, a bad example to a people. Soldiers and adventurers whose wild wandering life appealed to man's natural instincts could, by a bold venture, satisfy the dreams of avarice, while the slow process of the counting-house was accumulating only enough to make a living. A nobility, originally endowed by the bounty of a sovereign, soon held merchants in contempt, regarded wealth as the necessary appanage of their titles and degrees; and while a grandee was proud of his possessions because he had inherited them from his forefathers, a Dutch or English merchant was proud of them because he had earned them for himself.

Moreover, in a Republic like Holland, or constitutional country like England, the race of life was a more open one than where the will of the sovereign might distribute and dispose of the revenues of the country amongst his courtiers as he pleased. In these freer countries commerce was the surest, if the most laborious, means of acquiring money, and that position and power which in a free country money cannot fail to bring with it.

The desire to trade, and the facilities towards trading which a good seaboard gave, soon combined together to produce powerful warships as a defence to vessels bearing valuable cargoes, and the germ of a great navy was sown amongst the cargo ships of a mercantile marine.

Where private wealth may carry with it all the

dignity and consideration that attaches to high nobility in other countries, and, if ambition be in that direction, will in due course achieve nobility too, men will boldly risk fortunes, and venture savings which, under other conditions, they will furtively put away. Private enterprise too has this advantage over official action, that where the latter may be diverted from its purpose by political and other considerations, the former will continue patiently and doggedly in its course. The policy of a trading company is single-minded. Party does not influence it. Its resources are not diverted from their object and turned into other channels according as the exigences of the public exchequer may demand.

While the foreign and colonial policy of an English Government may be vacillating, hesitating, and perplexing, the operations of its great trading companies are business-like, vigorous, enterprising, and to be relied upon. The business man knows what he wants, and marches straight to his object. If he cannot reach it at once he waits for a better opportunity, but the ulterior goal is always the same. He will allow no outside influences to disturb his plans or interfere with the methods which he has found to be the best.

How great appears the advantage of such action compared with that of governments which are often obliged to trim their sails to catch the air of popularity, and must direct their policy according to the variations of the political barometer!

There are advantages then in the anomalous system by which our Empire has been put together, and that it is due to private enterprise is the factor which has given it its strength and durability.

But in a constitutional country such as England the ruler reflects the ideas of his subjects, and if he cannot direct, may mould and influence the destinies of the country.

The rulers of England who followed Elizabeth listened to the echo of her stirring time, and asserted and fostered our supremacy at sea. If the foreign policy of Cromwell was not sagacious, it had at anyrate the merit of being strong, and he grasped with a soldier's instinct where the decisive factors in the struggle with Holland lay. No despot ever maintained our pride at sea more jealousy than did he, and arrogant is the only term to distinguish the attitude adopted by his ships, with his consent, towards those of the rest of the world. Thus it came about that even the convulsions of the Revolution did not turn us from our course. The broad lines of our naval policy were unaltered from the close of the fifteenth century to the great peace at the beginning of the nineteenth, and now that the British people have gradually absorbed and taken the management of all the institutions of the country into their hands there are signs that they are determined to make our supremacy at sea their first duty and most pressing care.

Colbert, the Minister of Louis XIV., also perfectly understood the factors which produce sea-power, and Captain Mahan has admirably illustrated his contentions by showing how, while Colbert enjoyed the Royal favour and possessed the opportunity he threw all his energy and industry into the development of naval strength for his country. What private enterprise in England and Holland had called into being by a natural process, was in France to be the product of a highly-centralised official intervention such as is characteristic of all French efforts. The most decisive way of obtaining the object in view was perfectly clearly understood. The soil, naturally adapted in England and Holland for the particular growth, was to be artificially prepared in France for the production of the same luxuriant crops. Production was to be stimulated; trade encouraged; shipping provided; colonies and markets established.

The success of such schemes clearly depended on the life of their originator, and on his retaining the power, conferred by the favour of a despot, of carrying them into effect. It is enough to state briefly here, that the sunshine of Royal favour waned, the saplings forced into growth by an artificial process withered; the sheltering hand withdrawn, the seedlings did not fructify. The imagination of the King was caught by the glow of conquest and annexation on shore. The plans which it would have needed years of patient endeavour to perfect were forgotten. Worse than all, Louis quarrelled with Holland, and entered into an alliance with England to destroy her great rival on the sea. An incredibly foolish act, for it permanently secured the sea-power of England; and while the will-o'-the-wisp of glory led France far beyond her frontiers, and emptied her exchequer, the prosperity of these islands grew year by year. The truth was again illustrated that expansion by sea produces colonies and increases a country's wealth, while aggrandisement by land impoverishes it by the expenditure that is necessitated, and mortgages the resources of the future in furnishing the cause of further strife and fresh depletion.

But while the commercial basis of the Empire has been here insisted on because the problem of Imperial defence cannot be completely grasped until that fundamental principle and all that follows from it has been recognised, it is necessary also to lay stress on the dangers that may lurk in a blind and unintelligent acceptance of the fact.

A commercial spirit is essentially selfish, the pursuit of private gain an incentive to national expansion and progress which is by no means elevating. Self-reliance, honesty, patience, caution, and assiduity will doubtless take men far, but more unselfish impulses are needed in a great national crisis. The more military virtues of

self-abnegation, subordination, personal courage, quick decision, and patriotism will alone preserve a nation great.

To seek money for the sake of what money will buy is a motive which will not spur men to face cheerfully great sacrifices, to run great personal risks, or endure prolonged privations.

Not to look beyond commercial profit is to be politically shortsighted. To gain a point in the easiest way is not always the soundest course. Money will buy many things—men to fight for you amongst others—but the nation that condescends to mercenaries has already lost its manhood. The acquisition of riches is so fascinating that soon everything that interferes with it is regarded as an interference to be kept away at all costs. Men see things as they wish to see them. An army becomes an unnecessary expense, and can be got together when wanted. It is apparently cheaper to do so than to keep an adequate one always in existence. War is to be avoided at the sacrifice of honour and dignity, so that the price of food may be kept low, and the progress of trade be uninterrupted.

Yet the greater the volume of commerce grows, the wider the arms of the Empire are forced to stretch, the more must we come into contact with the various peoples of the world. The friction of clashing interests in commerce produce heat. Punitive expeditions have to be set on foot. The thousand channels of trade bear within them the seeds of a thousand little wars. Men by no means cowardly, but absorbed in the pursuit of wealth alone, may soon shut their eyes to all other considerations except buying and selling, and grudge the precautions that perhaps interfere with trade because they cause expense. An isolation is next demanded for us, liberty to toil in a manner independent of the rest of the world. If colonies and vast foreign possessions

necessitate a different policy, they may be allowed to drift away, to swim alone if strong, if not, to sink into the possession of a more energetic or far-seeing nation. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that such views as these were held at a period when our commercial position was unrivalled, and our sea-power more unchallenged than at present.

The presence of fleets and ships at foreign ports, and on our trade-routes throughout the world, was a need brought practically home to those connected with any form of commerce over sea, and therefore the necessity for an efficient navy was never so completely lost sight of as was the need of an army held ready for action too. But even the navy was allowed to dwindle, in the days when the story of the growth and preservation of the great empire that had descended to them was forgotten by the people of this country.

Of late years our awakening from a selfish dream, where we figured as the sole heirs of the world's wealth, and other nations were to accept the situation, and allow our operations to be unmolested, has been somewhat sudden. The spirit of commerce has informed other great nations not disposed to accept our supremacy unchallenged: has worked its influence in the same manner as history has taught us to expect; and in quite recent years another great sea-Power, which is also a land-Power of the first magnitude, has been called into being by commercial necessities.

Such striving for sea as well as land strength evidences to us the need a great empire feels for both. We too feel that need, and the part that our land forces will have to play remains to be discussed in a later chapter.

## CHAPTER II

### THE ANALOGY BETWEEN LAND AND SEA WARFARE, AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON ONE ANOTHER

THERE have been so many land and so few naval wars of late that it has almost become customary in this country to use the word war with reference to operations conducted upon land, and to regard sea-warfare as something technical and abnormal, lying outside the area covered by the general term.

What is called "the art of war," and its history, is often treated as though it excluded naval combats entirely, and in the great majority of works bearing upon the subject that part of it which deals with the sea is altogether omitted. Similarly the term military is almost always used in its narrow sense, which comprehends only operations on shore, while such expressions as "military men" and "military action" are in the popular notion associated with the land forces of the country alone. Amongst other explanations of this circumstance, a salient one is to be found in the fact that long ago all seamen were not, as it were, combatant, and that there was a sharp distinction between that part of a crew which simply propelled the ship, and that which was trained to fight and had nothing to do with navigation. The men who worked the great oars of the triremes and galleys simply played the part filled in modern days by screw-propellers and paddle-wheels. They took the fighting machine where they were ordered; their duties were

simply mechanical, and ended when collision occurred. In succeeding ages there often existed a similar difference between the men who navigated and those who formed what may be termed the garrison of the ship, just as down to quite modern times the drivers of our batteries were civilians who had performed their share of duty when they had brought the guns into position to be unlimbered. They conducted a gun in the same manner as they would drive a farm-waggon or a team of horses in the plough. But thin partitions divided soldier, sailor, or civilian.

Down to quite recent periods there appeared to be nothing incongruous in a man figuring at one moment on horseback as a general, and at another on the poop as an admiral. Anthony and Octavius Cæsar fought their quarrel out at sea with the same readiness and dexterity as they would have shown on shore. Don John of Austria was distinguished as a general before he gained one of the most decisive naval victories of history at Lepanto. Raleigh was prepared to command on either element.

A born cavalry soldier like Prince Rupert dealt his most successful strokes when in command, not of horsemen, but of ships. Monk was both admiral and general; while, on the other hand, a Doge, such as Dandolo or Morosini, was equally at home in a sea-fight or a siege, and Admirals Bonnivet and Coligny may be quoted as affording examples of the intervention of seamen on shore. Even our artillery was amphibious in its nature not more than a century ago, when examples of batteries serving on board ship are to be found,—the name, "Matrosses," by which the ordinary privates, as distinguished from the skilled gunners, were known, revealing the kinship to the sailor, and surviving as an official designation till quite modern times. Certain of our regiments have also

had the honour to see service on board ship, while in these latter times our navy have almost altogether gained their laurels fighting side by side with our land forces.

No further apology for my desire to regard war in its broadest aspect, and to try and note the points of analogy that exist between the art of its application by land and on the sea, is perhaps needed. But if it be, let us find it in reflecting that we are islanders, that war, wherever waged, is the same effort of force to bring about a result which milder methods have failed to procure, and that in our case some part at least of that effort must be a naval one. In any case, I believe that in a discussion of Imperial defence for a nation such as ours, whose army and navy must necessarily be interdependent and complementary to one another, it is desirable to find as many points of contact between the two as possible, to widen the basis of argument and appreciation as far as one can.

And, in truth, the broad principles of war are applicable to and are accepted by soldiers and sailors alike. Commanders are guided by the same strategical maxims both by land and sea, and of late it has not been unusual to find exponents of land warfare marshalling the views and quoting the words of Captain Mahan, who has made sea warfare his special study, and who has formulated his chief opinions only with reference to it.

That there are special factors in both methods of fighting quite outside universal application is, of course, the case. They must be recognised and allowed for. To establish an analogy is fascinating, but may prove misleading if in the endeavour to find similarity we press too far, allow our wishes to influence our judgment, or let fanciful ideas take possession of us.

On the other hand, an unknown science is best

approached through one which is familiar; and, if the latter can illustrate the former, to appeal from what is known to what is unknown is a sure method of rousing interest. To many who read military history, and can appreciate its teaching, naval history, as applied to sea warfare nowadays, is a sealed book, because it is regarded as dealing with something essentially technical and mysterious — a matter which unprofessional men cannot understand, a science which the constant appearance of new construction and armament has placed more or less in a state of flux. Yet I believe the broad principles of naval warfare remain the same, whether sails or steam propel fleets, and the great laws which govern the application of force either on land or sea are still potent, whether ironclads and torpedo boats, or three-deckers and fireships form the armaments of the age.

It will, then, be a distinct assistance to those who are studying war on shore to be able to apply to that on the sea, with which Imperial defence is bound up, some of the principles they have been in the habit of following, and to find the same causes producing the same results on either element.

Besides, an empire so extended as is ours demands for its defence a special and universal force; able to act both by land and sea, and to be handled in a liberal grasp that gathers army and navy together into its hand, and wields them together, now in one way and now in another, according as the situation demands. A war for us can never mean, or ought never to mean, a purely land war. A purely naval war can be conceived of more easily, but that, as will be shown in a later chapter, can only have a limited scope, and when it rises to the dignity of a great struggle the intervention of an army will surely be demanded.

But for purposes of Imperial defence our forces of

every kind should be regarded as available for the direction of one intellect. Some will be of one nature, some of another, different tools to meet various difficulties, but capable of being directed by one central organism which understands the qualifications and utilities of each.

Approaching the subject from what, for want of a better term, must be called the military standpoint—that which is most familiar to the great majority of us—we are called on to remember that the most elementary of strategical maxims enjoins a general to ensure the safety of his communications.

A secure line of supply is absolutely essential to the army of a civilised power. Through it flows the nourishment and recuperative power which secure to it life and being as an armed force. To cut it is to sever an artery, to destroy it means death. Therefore the great strategists teach us that if we wish to strike a decisive and paralysing blow, our object, while we safeguard our own, should be to assail the communications of our opponent.

It is precisely for the same consideration that predominant sea-power is demanded by Imperial defence. Secure lines of supply and intercourse between its component parts are as vitally necessary to an empire as they are to an army.

A great fortress in isolation becomes a splendid tomb. A great army cut off on distant shores has found its grave.

When Mack capitulated at Ulm, and Cornwallis at Yorktown, Bazaine at Metz, or Menou at Alexandria, the same forces were at work.

Imperial strategy demands naval supremacy as a first postulate in our schemes of defence with the same uncompromising austerity that inflicts condign punishment on the general who neglects to safeguard his connection with his base.

We did not always see it so, however. Perhaps the very variety of the ever-changing ocean, Protean in its shifting aspects, baffled us. To some it seemed, I might even say seems, to appeal as a vast obstacle, a wide defence set by Providence round our favoured isles,—"the moat defensive to a house," of which Shakespeare wrote. To such minds it seems we can always rest secure inside our impassable barrier; it is only when we rashly venture forth that we run risks and danger.

But to others, now I am glad to think the vast majority, it represents an easy medium for transport, and offers to those who have the enterprise, and possess its secret, the securest means of reaching an opponent.

For it is always open to access, can never be overcrowded, is impervious to injury, and, save at the extremities, is unaffected by heat or cold.

But its very openness and vastness are confounding. Its immensity overpowers us. The unrestricted freedom of its space bewilders, and sets our feeble resources at defiance.

On shore many natural features come to our assistance; there are many adventitious circumstances that may favour our action, or hamper the activity of our foes. The physical geography and topography of a country must often assert their influence. A great river may safeguard a flank, a huge mountain-chain bar the path of an opponent. The roughness of the country may render movement away from roads impossible; no bridges or points of passage may break a river line. The tired troops which oppose us may be unequal to the march a wide turning movement will entail. The tracks and roads may not run in the direction where we may have most reason to dread the attempt being made. But on the ocean there are no limits to freedom of manœuvre. Armed forces afloat can be carried just where the cunning or caprice of a commander may

dictate. No natural obstacles or artificial channels prescribe his course: he carries with him what he needs; unwearied by day and night he pursues his silent way, free and untrammelled in his flight as a sea-gull on the wing.

The very existence of such a force at large constitutes a menace. That it exists at all, when we know not where it is, will in itself bring about a sense of uneasiness and misgiving. It is not enough to temporarily ward off the cause of anxiety. The phantom must be laid by personal touch; it must be grappled with and discredited for ever if our minds are to be at ease.

To wipe the hostile ships out of existence, to annihilate their capacity for mischief at the very outset is the best course. But to destroy you must get to close quarters, and we may not be able at once to find our foe.

In that case, our attitude must be so confident, our aggression so bold as we set forth to do it, that we shall compel the enemy to believe that we can do it. The giant's strength may be so obvious as to scare away all chance of opposition. The German fleets did not attempt to pick up the gage of France in 1870. The Russian ships were content to acknowledge the superiority of the Turks seven years later. Before a shot was fired during the Crimean War, the Allies held a supremacy as absolute as had fallen to us after the costly triumph of Trafalgar.

To establish this predominance at once is essential to us, for the special characteristics of naval warfare demand that the supremacy we seek for our maritime force must be quite indefeasible, and beyond the risk even of challenge.

For naval force, strong as elemental nature herself, comes and passes as viewless as the wind and lightning. No ruts or tracks or debris of any kind mark the paths

of ships; the burnt-out camp fires, the refuse, the dead animals, which strew the path of an army, are nowhere to be seen. The swirling furrows close up behind the keels, the foaming lather of the screw melts away. When a ship has passed the waves destroy every sign of her existence. Eloquent verse has not failed to sing this matchless quality of the ocean. Ten thousand fleets sweep over her in vain, and inflame the imagination of the poet, but to the soldier their pathless flight has a very practical significance; because, when on the sea we lose sight of our opponent, we can never know where we may light on him again.

Evasion is more easy for ships than for armies for another reason too. They need follow no given paths. Even in this crowded world the wide stretches of the oceans are still lonely. Even in these busy times you may steam for days and never see a sail. On the ocean there are no inhabitants to give information, no stragglers to pick up.

The flight, too, may be absolutely continuous. Men feed and sleep, as it were, on their horses, and what carries them along never wearies. Did conditions such as these prevail on land, few leaders could sleep at nights, and wars would be short indeed. The opponent could never be accounted for, there would be no knowing where next he might appear, no breathing-time, no rest, no refitting. In South Africa, where the veldt was often almost as easily traversed as the sea, and the enemy had at times a monopoly of mobility, we experienced circumstances which approximated to those I have imagined. The rules of strategy did not therefore apply; the conditions were abnormal, the odds against us almost overpowering.

The difficulty as to protection of communications in South Africa reflect, then, in some measure those that confront us when we study Imperial defence. To pre-

serve our line of communication, military and commercial, on the waters, a superiority in numbers of ships which is unchallengable must be sought. Mobility being equal, our strength must be ubiquitous. For we can launch no naval and military expedition with any but a gambler's hope of ultimate success until all doubts as to the preservation of its connection with its original base have been dissipated. The case is even stronger; we must preserve our ability to supply, not only our expeditions, but our people at home.

It is in these respects that the analogy between land and sea operations fails us, and these special attributes of the sea warn us not to press our argument too far.

On shore, even though the menace of interruption can be more effectively guarded against, a prudent and capable leader will shed part of his fighting strength as he forges ahead, and on the day of battle can rarely bring all his troops into action. Part of his force must be left to guard his base; ports and depôts on the route will demand garrisons. He can only fling anything like his whole might against an opponent when, by doing so, he at the same time either covers his own base, or is confident in its having been made impregnable by others.

Moreover, in land warfare the needs of the army in the field are paramount. The civil population of a hostile country are usually left to provide for their own existence; the lines of communication bring little or nothing into the country but what is intended for the invaders themselves. We know that it has not been so in South Africa—a fact which is only another example of the extraordinary conditions that rendered our recent war an abnormal one — but in Imperial warfare, where the navy plays so prominent a part, the necessity of establishing bases or lines of communication for our armed forces is scarcely of more importance

than that which imposes on us the duty of doing so in the interests of our civil population and mercantile marine. Trade, and free intercourse for trade, are as necessary to the health of our Empire as is the free flow of the vital fluid to our bodies. Without it, we could not bear the weight of our weapons, far less use them with effect.

The obligation to secure an almost sacred immunity from interruption for our communications throughout the Empire grows out of the peculiar characteristics of war on the sea, and reminds us of a special phase of naval strategy which a few years ago was so much in men's mouths that it may bore rather than interest those who remember the old controversies that raged round it.

A few words on the "fleet in being"—that portentous phrase that has played so prominent a part in discussions on national defence, can scarcely, however, be avoided.

Admiral Herbert, Lord Torrington, coined the expressive term. When censured for not engaging the French fleet more decisively at the battle of Beachy Head, 10th July 1690, he defended himself as follows:—

"Had I fought otherwise . . . the kingdom had lain open to an invasion. What, then, would have become of us in the absence of his Majesty, and most of the land forces? As it was, most men were in fear that the French would invade; but I was always of another opinion, for I always said that whilst we had a *fleet in being* they would not dare to make an attempt."

This power of latent menace exerted by a "fleet in being" has been rightly extolled by those who write of naval strategy as so vast a deterrent, that, while it exists, it is a serious bar to any enterprises against us in the nature of invasion.

That stout Elizabethan seaman, Wynter,* shrewdly held the Duke of Parma's force at Dunkirk to be powerless for mischief till the Dutch fleet, which hung upon the flank of his projected movement, had been disposed of. Soldiers can perfectly appreciate the strategic principle that underlies the contention of the naval men whose sagacity perceives the power of the "fleet in being"; but the theory may be pushed too far, and has indeed been exaggerated by some of its too ardent supporters. There is no more magic in the fleet than in the phrase. The force of the threat which the fleet in being holds over us depends on the relative size of the fleets engaged, on its being too strong to be masked — to put the matter in a nutshell, on its being able to carry out what it threatens to do. Its power at sea is precisely that of a force jeopardising the safety of a line of communication on shore, and is exerted in just the same manner. The power of evasion possessed by ships, which has already been noticed, certainly demands that the force exerting the menace be more closely watched than need be necessary on land; but that is simply a difference in degree not in kind, and no one will deny that it is possible to mask a naval force, or to fend off its attack by a detachment, provided its strength be not such as to render such expedients hopeless. The main principle is precisely similar both on sea and shore, and is capable of illustration from land as well as naval campaigns.

No general will invade a country while a hostile force can fall on his lines of communication. To do so would be to act in defiance of the first essential of offensive strategy — *i.e.* the establishment of secure bases and lines of supply. But that does not mean that because there is a hostile force somewhere in the field upon

* "The Navy and the Nation," by Clarke and Thursfield, p. 160.

your flank it is not possible to neutralise it and pursue your forward progress undisturbed.

It is simply a question of throwing out a sufficiently strong flank guard; a body of men which in large operations may be numbered by tens of thousands, and in small may be a matter of a company or two. When the Russians first invaded Bulgaria in 1877, the Turkish forces in the quadrilateral menaced their left flank, while another army of the Sultan's at Widdin threatened their right. Strong flank guards on either side were detached to ward off both dangers, and between the two protective walls thus formed the Russian advance pushed forward. In the final phase of the campaign of 1814, which had been illuminated by quite a coruscation of genius on the part of Napoleon, the presence of the Emperor with a force behind the Allies, nearer to Vienna, as he expressed it, than they were to Paris, was not enough to stop them from pushing on. The situation had been incorrectly gauged. Other factors in the problem outweighed the menace to their communications, and Napoleon had to acknowledge himself beaten. The "fleet in being" has no more the intrinsic and absolute properties of an amulet or talisman to shield from harm than any other fundamental principle of strategy, but is potent or the reverse, according as it is in harmony with the circumstances of the moment or not. As a matter of fact, there was a Russian fleet in being in the Black Sea when the allied fleets pursued their policy of invasion without let or hindrance. The fleet was there, and in strength—fifteen sailing ships of the line, twelve war steamers, and some brigs and frigates comprising it; but it was not strong enough to exert any determining influence on events, although it did exert a certain menace, the disregard of which might be termed rash by some.

The Japanese also invaded the Corea a few years ago when the Chinese fleet was still undefeated. On that occasion they exhibited the fallacy of a blind adherence to theory, but acknowledged the truth of the principle it inculcated by proceeding to engage and destroy the hostile fleet as soon as the landing had been effected.

Again the element of time enters into the problem. A fleeting opportunity may be seized, and in a little time a vast amount of mischief may be done. If the intention is to do as much mischief as possible, even at the sacrifice of the weapon which accomplishes it, an expedition might be regarded as having accomplished its purpose, even if its connection with its base were cut, and it ultimately had to surrender,

Or a force may hope to establish a new base in the raided country, and from thence, by alliances or local support, derive supplies to enable it to do mischief. The end will no doubt be that of the French army which landed in Egypt in 1798. But three weeks' or three months' warfare might, under other circumstances, prove as considerable a diversion and annoyance as those three years in Egypt proved, and the price might not be regarded as prohibitive by a state that had a vast command of men.

What has been said is by no means intended to disparage or discredit the value of the strategic counterstroke, potent both by land and sea, on which the theory of the "fleet in being" is really grounded, but to point out that it must be qualified by circumstances in the same way as every other principle of war. Again, it is certain that forces afloat are invested with the all-pervading characteristics of the element which bears them While ships are still borne upon the waters, they may confront you unexpectedly, like the "message from the sea" which the waves carry in the most unlooked-for direction when the vessel has disappeared.

It follows that, where operations on the sea are concerned, fixed defences can never alone guarantee the safety of foreign possessions, or keep the road to them open. We cannot build lines of blockhouses through the deep, and we know that nothing short of such a measure will sometimes suffice to preserve communications by restricting the activity of a mobile enemy.

Fast steamers on the waves represent the ponies of the Boers upon the veldt. But fixed defences may, nevertheless, free the fleet on precisely the same principle as fortresses or blockhouses may release troops.

Ships are, indeed, as much wasted when utilised to protect naval bases or coaling-stations as field armies are when told off to remain inactive and cover fortresses Whether on the coast or inland, strong places, when they cease to be a support and shelter to a movable force, become a source of danger rather than of strength. Metz and Strassburg hampered French strategy in 1870, because they were not prepared for war, and had to be "covered" by a field force. The armies were afraid to boldly leave them for fear they might be unable to hold out. Otherwise, the Imperial forces might have fallen back behind the Meurthe and the Moselle, where their mobilisation might have been duly completed, and the invading hosts faced with more chance of success.

To deny strategic points to an enemy, or to hold them because of the value they may be as supply ports and rallying-points to our own fleets, is a wise policy; but it may be pointed out that neither on land or sea do the posts thus created exert any positive influence beyond the radius in which their garrisons can manœuvre, or their armaments throw their projectiles. Strategists* are fond of indicating certain places on the map as

* The "strategists at sea," who provoked the sarcasm of Sir George Clarke, *vide* "The Navy and the Nation," p. 215.

dominating points, the possession of which would confer on their owners a kind of supernatural power over and above what their numbers and armament may bestow. Before the war we often read in the newspapers that we should hold Lang's Nek, and bar the entrance to Natal. Any force we could then have spared to occupy that position might indeed have prevented the Boers from utilising the particular pass that runs over the celebrated Nek. But there are many passes besides Lang's Nek, and while a force was sitting there, the enemy might have streamed down through Botha's and those other passes which are sufficiently practicable in the Drakensberg, to the South. The Nek might have been turned, too, from the Eastern side across the drifts of the Buffalo.

Meanwhile, unless the garrison at Lang's Nek had been so strong as to be able to launch a counter-attack, or detach parties to defend all the drifts and passes, or finally to leave Lang's Nek and manœuvre against the enemy's army, it could have exerted no influence beyond the immediate locality where it was.

Similarly, even were a Christian Power at Constantinople, unless her sea-power were such that she could issue out in strength, she would no more command the Eastern Mediterranean than does Turkey now. The acquisition would bring her many subsidiary advantages, but the actual site could not dominate waters many miles away.

There is no magic even in so excellent a naval base. It would be a support to fleets, and raids might issue from it. It would be possible from it to close the Bosphorus, and therefore the Black Sea, because the straits are narrow, and modern guns and other engines of war can be brought to bear; but to command the route to India, naval victories and a predominating force at sea would be needed.

A crowd is not dominated by looking out of a window. It will hold the streets till fired on, or, when out of fire, dispersed by a mobile force. Yet on land, where movement is confined to certain roads, a geographical point may really prove of vast strategic or tactical importance.

Roads or railways or waterways may meet and join in certain places, and the possession of the junction may form a valuable strategic point, and bar the use of more paths than one. The mouth of a defile, a mountain pass, or a province exceptionally rich in supplies, may similarly become of overwhelming importance.

It is very different, however, on the waves. There no defiles or obstacles limit movement. If a ship has steered too near the guns of a fort, she can stand a little farther out; the road is as good beyond artillery range as within it. The ocean is, in fact, nothing but road, and the right of the road falls to him who is strongest both on land and water; and he has proved that he is strongest only when he has met and overthrown his antagonist.

Towns and fortified posts, however deeply entrenched, however well armed and supplied, unless they can send forth flying columns, control nothing beyond the range of their guns. To defend a frontier or any stretch of country, a mobile force is demanded. Had we been able to keep such a force in the field—a force, that is to say, which surpassed, or was at least fully equal to the enemy in mobility—the commandoes in South Africa would have been met in every movement by our troops. As it was, the ubiquity which his mobility gave the enemy had to be met by the ubiquity of force which blockhouses gave us. But his ubiquity was compatible with concentration, ours was based upon dispersion. It was merely another manifestation of one of the eternal principles of war—that to defend a wide extent of territory or guard a line of communications, at any but a cost of offensive power which is prohibitive, you

need a highly mobile force. On the open stretches of the veldt the Boers could manœuvre against us with all the freedom and absence of restraint that belongs to a fleet at sea, and the analogy between land and sea warfare is here almost perfect; because, like ships, they trailed no long lines of waggons behind them, and were almost independent of supply arrangements.

There is a lesson here which is instructive, and it may be applied to Imperial defence. Aden and Malta, or even Gibraltar, do not command anything in the sense that the fort of Bard blocked Napoleon's path to Piedmont in 1800, or Ali Masjid commanded the Khyber Pass. They can bombard the foolish ships that do not keep far enough away, but they cannot, except by sending out mobile forces, that is to say ships, deny the highway of the ocean to whoever wants to use it.

It is easy to speak glibly and inaccurately about strategic "Keys," but I think that was a very pregnant saying of Lord Beaconsfield's, when he broke away from pedantry with the words, "The key of India is in London." London, not the geographical term, but all that it represents and implies,—a supreme sea-power, unimagined wealth, resources such as no ruler has ever had behind him before. While England bestrides the highways of the ocean, and London flourishes, while we can borrow money at 2½ per cent., and the King's writ runs throughout the Empire, India will never be snatched away from us.

If it be admitted, as it will be, that command of the ocean is the gift of naval strength which has asserted itself unmistakably, it follows that to establish superiority we must seek out the fleets of the enemy. What is this, then, but another application of that strategic principle which we have laid to heart in our studies of land warfare—namely, that the first objective of strategy should be the main armies of our opponents? Circumstances,

it is true, may be such that this ulterior object may be confused with an attack on the capital of the foe. That capital, as in the case of Paris or London, may represent the centre and mainspring of existence of a nation, and its loss may possibly be as paralysing as that of a great army. We know that circumstances gave Washington such exceptional importance during the American war. We may believe that the loss of London would be a shot through the brain. Yet such exceptions but prove the rule, that to deal decisive blows such as will rapidly end a war we strike not at localities but at their produce, at main armies and not at cities, at centres of vitality not at geographical points.

Similarly, at sea, it is the destruction of the hostile fleets that forms our objective: we endeavour to render them powerless for mischief by wiping them out of existence altogether. "Stone dead hath no fellow"; we fight not to win, but to annihilate; and we so dispose our force that collision with the chief armaments of the enemy may be assured to us, and that our blow shall meet with resistance sufficiently substantial to develop its crushing effect.

It has already been noted that a foe may more readily elude us by sea than on shore. The secrecy of the sea enables a whole fleet to pass within striking distance of another without its presence being betrayed. The ships that a comparatively few miles separated at night may in the morning be far out of sight of one another. In 1798 the French fleet from Toulon, bound for Egypt, and our fleet, eagerly on the watch to pounce upon it, passed each other within sixty miles without either of them discovering their opponent. The chase was therefore prolonged, and the destruction of the French fleet postponed until after it had effected its purpose and had landed the expeditionary force. The enemy had eluded us at the start, and we did not know where to

look for him again. If you are acquainted with the end as well as the beginning of his course, you can make fairly sure even at sea of fastening on an enemy at one or other point. But the space between represents the unknown quantity that you cannot reckon with. The only factor in the problem that is usually certain is the presence in some port of the force you wish to render powerless for mischief.

To watch the bolt-hole and fall on him as he emerges from it, is therefore the course that offers the best chances of success.

On an element where evasion is so easy, and its consequences have often proved so troublesome, the surest mode of dealing with an adversary is never to let him out of sight.

In the old days the frigates in the offing watched the masts in harbour, or the exits which must be used. The battleships lay perhaps out of sight, but were never out of call. The light cavalry of the sea kept them well informed as to what was going on, and when the topsails showed, the signals ran along the water, and the great ships gathered to the spot. The smoke of the furnaces getting up steam will, I suppose, give warning now, the big battleships will press forward, the old manœuvre will be repeated in another way.

But we know that sound strategy frowns upon any attempt to be strong everywhere, and the application of the rule against dissemination of force is universal. Neither by land nor sea can a leader, unless in an altogether overwhelming preponderance, hope to meet his opponent at advantage everywhere. It is not therefore the intention to frustrate every raid, to catch every fugitive, to stifle every little attempt at aggression. But it is very firmly the intention to be superior at decisive points, to waylay and engage the main forces of the enemy with the chances of victory considerably in our

favour. If every little harbour and inlet cannot be sealed, we can, at anyrate, hover round and watch the great arsenals and naval bases which contain the most dangerous elements opposed to us, and can arrange to concentrate such a force against them as will enable us to bear away a decisive victory.

After all, it was, and is, the same on shore. The army whose cavalry lose touch with the enemy is as completely baffled as was Nelson himself before the two great battles of his life. When the German cavalry lost touch with that of the French after Worth, despite all their organisation and training, the armies and the staff were placed at a huge disadvantage. Whither had MacMahon led his army? Where next might he be expected to appear?

When Grouchy failed to press the Prussian columns in retreat after Ligny, the same results supervened, the same doubt and hesitation made their presence felt, led up to divided counsels and ineffectual half measures, and culminated in the complete overthrow of a master mind in war and a disaster the most far-reaching of modern times.

When in May 1862 Jackson slipped away from Banks up the Shenandoah Valley, friend and foe were alike mystified, and that pale ghost, irresolution, again stalked abroad. A sea fog has its counterpart on land.

The principles of defensive strategy can also be shown to be the same on both elements. The skilful general selects for the strategic deployment of his force points whence he can strike freely, and with the greatest advantage to himself. He does not keep his troops crouching along a frontier, or cooped up behind the earthworks that girdle in a town. Strategy is surely exerting its power though no men are visible, and no great cannon or tangible barricades catch the eyes of anxious

citizens. A town may be safe without a garrison or a harbour without a guardship. While hawk-eyed Jackson was poised above Elk Run Valley, five-and-thirty miles away the burgesses of Staunton slept secure. "The storm-beaten ships on which the grand army never looked stood between Napoleon and the conquest of the world."

In 1805 the moat that encircled our homes was not in itself impassable. It proved an obstacle, not on account of its width or depth, but because more than a thousand miles away a vigilant admiral was fretting for a fight. And though his ships rolled idly in the trough of the sea, strategy, impalpable and occult as a force of nature herself, was exerting a mysterious pressure, like that of frost, or the ebb and flow of the tide, as unintelligible to the ignorant, as persistent, as inexorable, and as strong.

## CHAPTER III

### THE PREDOMINANCE OF THE NAVY

IN the preceding chapters we have learnt that the safety of the Empire is not assured until we possess complete freedom of military transit throughout its extent, and that commerce demands a similar independence with an urgency scarcely less. Such security is alone attained when we possess command of the sea; and the task of our navy is to obtain the necessary predominance for us. All this is, I trust, quite clear, and beyond the reach of controversy. It is, indeed, usually so well recognised nowadays that it assumes the character of a self-evident proposition, and, in the opinion of some, the supremacy of our navy having been established, no more anxiety as to Imperial defence need be felt, and controversy on the subject should be hushed. But such a method of begging the question will scarcely commend itself to those who examine every aspect of it. The relationship of navy to army is not so easily to be disposed of; and it is necessary to speak out strongly and clearly on this question, because it is not always argued out disinterestedly or with unbiassed minds. Were the structure of our society less complicated, our form of government less cumbrous, the problem of party allegiance less complex, such a supreme question as the efficiency of our navy might possibly be provided for on its needs alone, taken out of the cockpit of politics or partisanship, and dealt with as a matter concerning

which the good of the state was the only consideration. *Above all*, what was spent on the navy would in no wise modify the army estimates. But this has never been the case. The exigencies of party warfare reacting on the Budget will only allow in normal years of a certain amount of money being spent on armaments. There must be something in the nature of a struggle when to two hungry men is thrown half the bread they need between them. If the navy gets all it asks, it may be impossible, loudly as it is calling, to give the army anything at all. And *vice versâ*, the drain of a great land war may so diminish the flow of money that the fleets on which our whole system of defence relies may be left wanting.

Again, while it would be a huge fallacy to suppose that the first few naval victories will be decisive in our next struggle on a large scale; it is equally false to imagine that we can be indifferent to the duration of a war, provided we can sit in our impregnable islands secure against attack, careless of mankind in the lazy detachment of the Olympian gods. It is the aim of these pages to put forward another conception of Imperial defence — a conception which views all the forces of the Empire as a whole, which seeks to establish a correlation between them, and endeavours to free itself of any preconceived notions under which their co-operation has sometimes been perfunctory rather than sympathetic and genial. The good of the service is often the last word with a Minister when personal claims conflict; the good of the Empire is the final argument of statesmanship. If it were really true that the security of the Empire could be achieved with a supreme navy alone, recruiting for the army should certainly cease, and what patriotic soldier would gainsay the decision? But the truth of that hypothesis is easily challenged; the competence of the navy

alone is denied, and then the question arises—What is the due proportion we should aim at in adjusting our forces, when will the navy be strong enough, or the army be not too strong? It is inquiries such as these that compel every officer who studies Imperial defence to face the problem squarely, and dig down to the very root of the subject.

But the soldier can only very tentatively approach so highly technical a subject as naval strength, for even naval experts are divided as to how that most elastic term can be defined. There is such a variety of strength, so many different kinds of ships. Various rival types of construction follow close upon one another; various natures of protective armour are brought into existence by an ever-varying penetration of projectiles. Coal endurance and pace, offensive power and protection, the skill of the commander, the training in combination of the ships, the excellence in shooting of the guns' crews, and finally, the strategic conception of the admirals. So many qualities unite to produce efficiency—there are so many ingredients in the mixture—that to analyse it accurately may well puzzle an inquirer. Fortunately we have always two standards by which we may, from time to time, measure our readiness for war. They are supplied in two simple propositions. What do we want to do? And what opposition are we likely to encounter in attempting to accomplish our purpose?

The reply to the first supplies us with an indication of what is the duty of the navy in Imperial defence; that to the second enables us to estimate the strength it should possess to perform its task with ease.

In another form, the question might be put thus: What coalition against us does a reasonable foreign policy anticipate, and how ought we to deal with the

most powerful combination there is probability of our being called upon to face?

For reasons which I need not examine here, a foreign policy, alike free from over-confidence and nervousness, does not anticipate a stronger coalition against us than that of the two nations which at present come next to us in sea-power. We have been called upon to face heavier odds in our past history; it is easily conceivable that we may have to meet a stronger coalition in the future; but, as a basis for argument here, if we accept a two-Power standard, we shall not go very far astray.

As things stand at present, and with due regard to the history that lies behind us, it is perhaps no more than our right to claim that we are mistress of the seas — as against any other two Powers, at anyrate. If the oceans be Britannia's realm, where then do the frontiers of the Empire run? Where the enemy's coast lines meet the waves, is obviously the reply. When on the Continent nation faces nation, when diplomacy has said her last word, and the arena is being cleared for combat, vedettes watch one other along the marches between the two, and far away behind them the great columns are rolling forward, gathering impetus as they advance. When Britannia picks the gauntlet up the arena includes all the oceans, and she too must place her outposts along the frontier line. Then many miles away from our homes the scouts of the ocean will be found steaming to and fro, alert and vigilant, while in touch with them, but out of sight, the heavy battleships will draw together opposite the stronghold where crouches the power of the enemy.

Unless the odds be greatly in his favour, it is not to be expected that our opponent will sally out at once into the open to give us battle. He will probably prefer to do what mischief he can to our commerce, and avoid decisive engagements; or, if he does pledge

himself to battle, to fight where the consequences of victory will be most advantageous to him, the results of defeat most disastrous to us. At first, therefore, he will very likely endeavour to elude us, and before we can destroy his fleets we shall have to find them.

Moreover, to carry the war into the enemy's realm is the true strategy of competent leaders. That is why Howard and his captains wanted to meet the Armada off the coast of Spain, why Raleigh wished to fight out the issue before our shores were sighted at all, why St Vincent in 1803 propounded the policy of blockading the enemy's ports, why for many weary months of a comparatively short life Nelson was tossed about on board ship observing Toulon and Cadiz.

During the great war at the beginning of the last century and close of the previous one, outside every hostile stronghold a British fleet stood on guard. In foul weather and fair, week by week, and month after month, the patient ships hung on the horizon with ominous persistency. Foreboding and intolerable as that sleepless watch may have been to the enemy, we know that the strain to our fleets was scarcely less harassing and distressing. Monotony and discomfort and ill-health afflicted the men. The sails and yards and timbers of the ships themselves were not without signs of the strain. The effort was exacting, but the results obtained justified the sacrifice.

But whatever the consequences of the wear and tear may have been on the ships, the effect on the men made for efficiency. While the crews waited, for their opportunity, they were at the same time preparing themselves to meet it. Always on the waters the sailors grew quick and ready aloft, gunnery was improved, training for war generally was constantly going on. The rigour of the life braced the nerves and sinews and mental fibre of officers and men alike, and when at length battle came,

they were in the best possible condition, and bounded into the arena like gladiators prepared through weeks of careful practice for the supreme moment. Cooped up within a port, their opponents, on the other hand, had lost vigour and aptitude, and entered on the struggle with their *moral* weakened by the humiliating inactivity that they had been compelled to endure.

Carried to its extreme limits, St Vincent's policy is, however, one that manifestly demands a very superior navy, and may otherwise lead to disaster. It calls for strength everywhere, which, unless vast resources are available, and can be kept up, may inevitably decline into weakness everywhere, and the laying open of our blockading fleets to defeat in detail. A reserve fleet must therefore be held ready in home waters to make good losses, temporarily to relieve ships, and to reinforce any British naval force exposed to the attack of hostile fleets combined so as to be superior in strength at one selected spot to ours in that particular neighbourhood.

Further, we must note that the aim of St Vincent's and Nelson's strategy was not to seal up in port the ships of the enemy. On the contrary, they were to be allowed to emerge, or even to be lured out, if possible. But only to their destruction. Frigates were detailed to call together our forces to meet them as they sailed forth from their shelter; they were to be followed up; kept in sight; and attacked when the British forces were collected,—the great object of our admirals being that the whereabouts of the principal bodies of the enemy should always be well known. When it was known where they were, their destruction would form the feature of a distinct plan.

But a hostile fleet at large, out of touch with one of ours, was a menace to be guarded against at all hazards.

We know that even in these days, when telegraphs

render communication easy, the fact that a hostile squadron is let loose at sea exerts an influence quite beyond the real powers of destruction possessed by it. Even in the confined area of the Mediterranean, a fleet which had eluded vigilance would pass out of control, and when unwatched by an adequate force on our side, would possess latent powers of mischief that would attract and receive an amount of attention altogether disproportionate to its actual strength.

It is always the unknown which exerts the most marked effect in war. If we only knew what the enemy was about to do and where he was, it would be comparatively easy to organise victory, but that is exactly what we rarely or never can arrive at, and hence the difficulties and doubts that weaken resolution have their origin.

By observing, which is a better term than blockading, the great strongholds of our opponents, we can at least early discover any attempts towards great combinations that are made, and can frustrate them by counter combination. We cannot hope to mount guard over every port and hermetically seal every exit, but we can watch the most important places and prevent any substantial force from creeping out unperceived. We can likewise so distribute our forces that their speedy concentration against all possible hostile combinations may be assured.

Such distribution of our forces belongs to the realm of high strategy. It is the counterpart of the strategic deployment of armies on land which we have been taught forms the crown of strategic skill. It hinges chiefly on accurate and early information as to the dispositions and movements of the enemy. In other words, it demands an intelligence department, capable, energetic, enterprising, and well-informed; a system for acquiring knowledge as to the enemy's movements stretching like a network over every coast, always at

work in peace time, but with its eyes turned steadily towards war and to the demands that war will make upon us. Such an organisation is not readily improvised; it can only be developed through long years of patient labour in establishing connections, securing agents, acquiring knowledge of local circumstances and resources, in bringing about a state of things which, when war breaks out, will place us in the position of men who know, as opposed to those who only guess or surmise. The highest genius and most intelligent minds are baffled when, relying on the light of nature, they are met by others supplied with a knowledge of facts such as are here indicated, while to collect, collate and utilise such facts is not beyond the reach of mediocrity.

Whether, even if we feel strong enough to make the attempt, we shall in future be able to shut up hostile fleets in port in the manner I have described is a question on which I believe sailors have considerable doubt. It was only when the wind blew in a favourable direction that sailing vessels could hope to leave harbour. Until, therefore, the wind shifted into the particular quarter that was propitious, the stress of watching might be relaxed, to be taken up with redoubled vigour when the circumstances again became dangerous. It was only to leeward, too, that escape was possible, and the area to be closely guarded was therefore considerably restricted.

It was necessary also to give a dangerous coast-line a wide berth, to allow an ample margin of safety, whereas now steam has given such comparative precision of manœuvre that the danger may be closely approached, and great vessels creep along close under the cliffs or near the shoals that must formerly have been widely avoided. A steamship, too, has less above the water than the old line-of-battle ship, and there are, of course, no sails to attract attention. On the whole,

then, it may be fairly questioned whether St Vincent's policy can in future be carried out with the same success as formerly. Even in the old days, no blockade could make a certainty of sealing up a fleet which was determined to escape. That Villeneuve got clear away from Toulon is a commonplace of history, but Missiessy baffled Collingwood at Rochfort, as Nelson had been baffled at Toulon.

It is not necessary for us here to try and determine a difficult naval question, full of technicalities, and only to be disposed of by authoritative expert opinion. There always has been another view of what naval policy should aim at when hostilities commence, and modern conditions may lend an increased support to such opinion at the present time.

But it is certain that if the fleets of the enemy are not to be kept under lock and key, they must be met in superior force, and brought to battle when they take the open water. When next we enter on a naval war, the command of the sea, which is essential to our purpose, is not likely to go to us by default, and, if it do not, will have to be obtained by force. We must see to it that when we have to fight, we do so with two chances to one in our favour. The strategical positions occupied by our fleets must be so well chosen that the enemy putting to sea will be confronted by forces such as may engage him with a reasonable certainty of success. He must never be allowed to completely escape into the unknown. Whether he is to be fallen upon immediately he leaves his shelter, or not until a short time later, does not materially alter the principle of the action against him, which is governed by the determination to render him, at all hazards, powerless for mischief, either alone or in combination with other fractions of his force.

In addition to the battleships that will thus have

to be watched, masked, or defeated, the cruisers of the enemy have likewise to be dealt with. Some of these will probably elude our fleets whether they endeavour to establish a close blockade or not, and they will then strike at our mercantile marine, or at any transports or convoys conveying munitions of war that we may have at sea.

To meet them, and prevent their depredations, cruisers must be detached, and, if we are to have convoys, escorts for them will have to be found also.

Cruisers, the frigates of which Nelson felt the want years ago, to follow up and track hostile fleets that may have eluded us, to act as messengers and scouts, will again be needed with our concentrated fleets.

Not only would there be a difficulty in finding a fleet or squadron or single ship thus at large, but there might be even more in bringing them to battle when discovered.

We here touch a question where military and naval tactics and strategy have their points of difference. Speed of manœuvre on shore is a matter of exact computation, as between European powers. The Boers were all mounted riflemen, and sternly has the fact of their vast superiority in mobility been forced upon us. Certain savage tribes may possess powers of rapid movement which the British soldier cannot be expected to rival. But between Europeans in large bodies the disparity is not very great. Transport and train hamper the best marchers. What is feasible in a day, where large battle units are concerned, has been pretty accurately gauged and is universally recognised.

But the speed of some ships is far greater than that of others, and, though that of a fleet is brought down to what its slowest ship can accomplish, the powers of that ship in the enemy's fleet are often an unknown quantity. Unless the pursuing fleet be quite homogeneous as regards speed, it may be outpaced by

another whose average speed is far lower, but in which the powers of individual ships are more uniform.

If we accept the principle that the enemy's fleets are to be parcelled out in the way I have described, shut up in port, or masked and shadowed each by a particular fleet told off deliberately for that specific purpose, we are placed in a position to define with some nicety exactly what the duties of our navy should be, and are provided with a standard by which to measure its efficiency for the task in hand.

The admirals who reported on the naval manœuvres of 1888 decided that it would not be found practicable to maintain an effective blockade of an enemy's squadrons in strongly-fortified ports unless the blockading battleships were in a preponderance of at least five to three. Under certain favourable conditions the proportion might, it is stated, be reduced to four to three; but a considerable preponderance of force must in these days belong to the blockaders, because modern ships, owing to their consumption of coal, will have to be relieved more frequently than was the case with sailing vessels. That the ships of St Vincent and Nelson were strained and worn almost to dangerous limits we are aware; still, they had only to think of food and water supply, and could hold the seas for three months at a time.

Again, naval opinion considers that a blockading squadron in open waters must be composed of battleships. Acting in the immediate neighbourhood of their own ports, it is said that coast-defence vessels may do effective service even in attack; but the ships that have to hold the open waters permanently must be of a different type, and we cannot press into such service ships that might fill a gap under less exacting conditions.

The work, then, to be performed in war by our

line-of-battle fleet can be approximately determined by counting the strength which might reasonably be expected to oppose it, and providing ourselves with a navy superior to the potential combination against it by about one-third.

But in addition to the battleships, naval authorities demand for the blockading squadrons at least twice as many cruisers as their opponents possess, while another estimate goes so far as to require one cruiser for each blockading battleship; in addition, let us remember, to the reserve squadron which I have shown would have to be kept ready in the Channel.

A number of cruisers, whose mission would be to protect our mercantile marine, must also be provided. But, since evasion and escape would not be impossible, and since it will be necessary to safeguard our interests in foreign waters, perhaps to convoy transports, and perform what may be termed the subsidiary duties of our navy in time of war, we shall want ships over and above those doing blockade duty, and forming the reserve squadron. The demand for ships mounts up the more we examine the duties of the navy, and the more we weigh the issues at stake.

Moreover, lest I should overstate the case, I have on a previous page suggested that we should measure our strength with that of the two sea-powers next in importance to us; and by a little optimism, not perhaps unjustifiable in the light of our past history, it is possible so to persuade oneself as to rise without misgiving from one's calculations. But many sailors think that a three-Power standard has lately been forced upon us, and such a standard, since the foreign press has spoken so unguardedly, has become in the opinion of many high authorities by no means a hysterical cry.

A soldier, and more especially one in an official position, is debarred from discussing the efficiency or

adequacy of the navy, even if he were, which I certainly am not, venturesome enough to try. It is beyond his duty to do more than place the situation broadly before those he addresses without reference to individual foreign Powers, and the attitude they may adopt towards us in the future. Those who desire to satisfy themselves as to how far figures go to prove the capability of our navy to completely fulfil the *rôle* its distinguished leaders have laid down for it, can do so with the greatest ease. Numerous publications will furnish them with the strength of foreign fleets and with their building programmes. It is similarly not a very difficult matter to ascertain our present strength and its future developments. My task ends when I have sketched that share in Imperial Defence which a soldier thinks will fall to our ships, and when I have shown where our army takes up its part, and how the two services can aid and supplement one another.

But though my scope may be limited, the interest which a soldier must take in all that concerns war does not necessarily flag. The army should, and, I am sure, does, sympathise with all that affects the sister service, and there are problems in connection with her which we do not forget even when we put them aside, and which continue to puzzle us, even though we may leave them to be solved by others. Perhaps it is because we have lately explored the weaknesses of our army that we feel anxiety, because we have been rudely disillusioned ourselves that we do not now accept as gospel what we clung to a few years ago with implicit faith.

When we enter on a war with some petty state, we may proceed tentatively as we have often done if such criminal playing with men's lives is any longer to be tolerated, send out a small force, a kind of *ballon d'essai*, and, if that be destroyed, follow it up with such a big one subsequently as will ensure success. In a cynical

spirit it may even be argued that such a course is in the long run cheaper than providing an expedition with more regard to the strategical problem than to the cost incurred. If a leader of a real genius be lit upon, he may make the little force suffice. No doubt, too, chance may sometimes balance science. But we cannot ever adopt such a happy-go-lucky policy where great interests are involved, and when our welfare, perhaps our existence, as a nation is placed in the scales. We cannot command success in such a supreme struggle, but we can at least leave nothing untouched which may bring success about. And owing to our peculiar circumstances we must go into the struggle fully determined to carry it through, not only with success, but with rapid and decisive success.

Taking stock on the basis of class against class of our position as regards the two next sea-powers, the answer as to our superiority is scarcely convincing. In cruisers we are above the standard, but in battleships below. Lord Brassey stated last November,* that in all the main elements of naval strength we are equal to the two-Power standard. The question is whether an equality is enough. A lifetime's continuous fighting had made a leader of Napoleon's calibre able to balance his chances of success to a nicety. The character of the leader, the quality of the troops opposed to him were appraised with exactitude. Long experience rendered Wellington even more accurate in his estimates. Napoleon counted on beating the Prussians at Ligny. Wellington was convinced that they "would be damnably mauled." But with all his confidence in his generalship, Napoleon ever aimed at as great a superiority in numbers as possible behind him.

Many think that our numerical superiority is no longer so great as it should be. It is argued that

* 1901.

according to the estimate already quoted, known as that of "The Admirals," it would certainly not be sufficient; it is said that it is not enough according to the standard of another high authority who has stated that our fighting fleet should out-number those of the next two Powers by at least one-third. If we are to be ready to meet a combination of three great Powers, it has been pronounced quite inadequate.

While the effect of modern guns and inventions is still an indeterminate quantity, it certainly does not seem, whatever may be thought of this last standard, that a two-Power standard can be regarded as anything more than one of mere prudence for a nation with such interests as ours to safeguard.

Force in war can be measured in various ways both on land and sea, and wide margins of safety should be allowed for. It may be exhibited in numbers of men, or in ships of the same type,—in training, in armament, in *moral*, in the physical or mental characteristics of individuals. We must be prepared for surprises and unforeseen contingencies.

What a difference such a personality as Nelson's made to the British fleet can scarcely be over-estimated. But until we have seen commanding genius blazing out like a beacon in the mazes of a great battle, we cannot be sure that we shall find it amongst our leaders. Indeed, to judge by the number of reputations every war has buried, we must distrust our judgment in this respect.

Our peace training tried by the demands of war may prove less sound than we imagine. It is difficult or impossible to test our armaments with those of our potential enemies; to more than guess at the relative efficiency of ships. As to that patriotic rant which regards the race we spring from as markedly superior in courage and endurance to other white races, it cannot be seriously considered.

Russia, with a population of 85,000,000 and a war strength of 900,000 men, sent in 1877 200,000 men and 800 guns to meet 165,000 Turks with 450 guns, felt confident of victory, but scarcely emerged triumphantly from a contest in which she had considerably underrated her opponent's strength

Moeltke never doubted as to the outcome of war in 1870, because he knew that Germany could put into the field 519,100 men with 1584 guns, yielding a preponderance which unmistakably outweighed the forces of France. Organisation and training, political stability, and, possibly, physique, placed Germany at an advantage too; but numbers and readiness for war were all strategy would allow for. Quality we still expect to be on our side in future, as it certainly was during the great French war; but we cannot be sure that in modern fighting it will have the same opportunity to assert its value as it had then. As I have said, the crews of the ships that kept the seas for months before the hostile ports, became adepts in seamanship because they were always at work amongst the spars and sails. Those strenuous watches supplied an unrivalled course of training, and when battle was joined the results were seen in the greater manœuvring power of both fleets and ships, and the superior readiness and handiness of their crews. Two rounds are said to have been fired by them for every one that they faced. They were better men and better gunners, as well as better seamen. When we also consider how great a prestige and *moral* impelled them onward, we need not weigh a boast too nicely which claimed that an English sailor in Nelson's day could beat two of the opponents he met with.

Here we have an example of what training in the hard school of actual service can bring about. There is a tangible superiority due to a certain cause; the cause removed, the results disappear. Nay, more,

similar causes brought about similar effects where another nationality was concerned.

In 1812-14 we, with all the traditions of the glorious past behind us, were at war with America. Our cousins over the Atlantic had been training their men at the guns too, and they had paid more attention to gunnery than the majority of our captains of the same period. Moreover, they had built frigates of a more powerful type than those that flew our flag.

It seemed madness for the few American frigates to try conclusions with the victors of the Nile and Trafalgar; yet in two successive engagements our ships had to strike their colours. We were beaten on our own ground by better gunnery, and a more powerful type of ship. Probably we should hear more of these humiliating defeats had they not luckily been overshadowed in the popular estimation by the brilliant victory of the *Shannon* over the *Chesapeake*, which first stayed the course of American success. Broke had trained his guns' crews to the highest perfection, and he reaped his reward in what is perhaps the most dramatic fight on record. The opportune blaze of his exploit enabled us to leave the arena with the glow of a great success on our faces; but the lesson is there when the glow has faded, and, whatever may be thought by the navy, our army would do well to ponder on what it means.

Our last war with America is here quoted to emphasise the argument that, under modern conditions, where the element of physique is largely discounted by machinery, there is nothing inherent in our ships to justify us in counting them superior to those of other nations in fighting capacity.

Everybody, of course, believes that when it comes to the pinch our superiority in gunnery and manœuvring power will be proved once more; but before experiment

has shown it to exist, it should not be counted upon when we reckon up our strength. We should possess the necessary superiority in number and quality of ships, in power of guns, in efficiency of seamen and of engineers. If superior skill and courage are found to be ours also, they will help to make our victories more decisive, but at the same time they cannot be calculated upon to win triumphs by themselves.

Thus, while the supremacy of our navy even over any other two Powers is said to be still open to question, the most pressing demand in Imperial defence is the cry for more ships. The supreme fleet will not alone save us, as the next chapter will show; but without a fleet that is unquestionably equal to the standard we have set before ourselves, no precautions that we may adopt, no efforts and no sacrifices that we may make on shore, will do more than prolong the agony, and put off a few days longer the final catastrophe.

It is not only that our security, our existence in these little islands, depend on a predominant navy; that proposition is never now disputed. The safety of our foreign possessions, with the exception perhaps of two, depends on it also, and on nothing else. The two exceptional cases — and they can only be regarded as partially so—are, of course, those of India and Canada. They may lay some claim to exception, because it is an attack by land that both most fear, and it would be possible for an enemy to assault them without first wresting from us the command of the sea.

But in a wider sense Canada and India are as much dependent on a supreme navy as are the other members of the empire. Neither of them is strong enough to fight alone; if communication with England were cut off for any length of time, both would infallibly be snatched away. It is, indeed, with reference to these

great dependencies that one of its most difficult duties would be thrust upon the navy when war broke out.

The defence of our north-west frontier of India will demand the despatch from home of immediate reinforcements, which may be placed roughly at two army corps. To transmit such a force across the seas until command of them had been assured would, if we were at war with more than one other great Power, prove a hazardous enterprise. The navy could certainly not safeguard it. Because, in the first instance, the whole of her energies and strength would be concentrated on the destruction or sealing up in port of the allied fleets.

But absolute annihilation would scarcely be the fate of the hostile ships all at once, while—even if the first reinforcements safely reached their destinations—the wastage in men, guns, horses, and all the paraphernalia that an army needs, would demand that a free and constant supply from home, and other parts of the world, should be kept up.

Not the least advantage which we derive from sea-power is, that our base in time of war is not England only but the world. Almost every part of the globe contributes something—either horses or mules or meat or some other supplies—to the sustenance of our fighting line. To keep all the roads open, all the channels of supply free, becomes the duty of the navy. Even after it has won its great victories, the strain upon it will still be immense, and the security of India is found to rest ultimately on our supremacy at sea.

In the case of Canada, the danger is not so pressing. We shun the thought that we shall ever have to draw the sword on the other side of the Atlantic; but the problem may have to be faced, and is of the same nature. The first reinforcements that would have to be dispatched would need, as matters now stand, to

be equally as numerous as those we must send to India; the demands, under certain potential circumstances, on the activity of the navy fully as great.

So that, although the power that may fight with us for India or Canada need not first challenge and destroy our maritime predominance, we, on our part, must first make good that predominance before we can effectively safeguard what we hold. The cause has, in either case, to be determined definitely; it is merely a question whether we must appear as plaintiff or defendant.

In the case of the great Commonwealth, the situation is very different. No possible enemy has a base in the Atlantic circle. Back behind any aggressive expedition for thousands of miles of open sea must run the lines of communication and supply of the fleet that ventures to make an attempt against our Australasian Colonies. No hostile squadron can ever invade the waters that encircle their shores without having first of all rendered interruption of the enterprise by our fleets impossible. Otherwise its line of supply would be cut; it could neither replenish its magazines, nor refit its ships, while a hostile force lay between it and the base, to which alone it could look for succour. While the English fleet is undefeated, no Power with any sense of responsibility would undertake an enterprise that called it to the Antipodes.

Here the circumstances differ widely from those that have just been discussed; the gage must be thrown down by our opponent; he can do nothing effective till he has given earnest of his capacity by a naval victory.

In this connection, that special attribute of sea-power, which forbids space to set limits to its operations, may be noted. Just as water seeks its own level, no matter how many miles separate the cisterns from the source, so the Power that has gained predominance at sea can

transmit its influence beyond sight and ken. It is not confined even to a continent; no natural barriers shut it in. Sea-power is as ubiquitous as salt water, all-pervading and diffusive as the air we breathe.

The consideration of this distinctive characteristic, this unique attribute, next forces on us the question whether the special squadrons kept up for, and allotted to, colonial defence need necessarily be bound to the immediate neighbourhood of their own homes. If the hostile forces can be located, the centre of gravity of the strategic situation lies where they are known to be. Following up the principle of strategy that teaches us to strike at the main forces of our opponent, it is apparent that we should gather our full strength against them wherever they have been discovered, and that our homes, apparently unguarded, are secure, as long as they can be neutralised or destroyed. Our towns and cities will be safe whether they can keep in view or not the defenders they send forth, and a contest for which an Australian colony is the prize, may be fought thousands of miles away from the coast-lines of the Commonwealth. The enemy which menaces it cannot be in force at more than one spot, and his starting-point must be from the Northern hemisphere. There he will be shadowed by a British fleet. If he make distant enterprises, that fleet will follow him just as Nelson hunted Villeneuve to the West Indies. If, on the other hand, he should concentrate his forces near our islands, ships left out of touch by his movement may draw in on him from the distant South, and leave their homes secure, when they combine to annihilate him under the cliffs and headlands of Europe.

Thus it is apparent that the duty of protecting the Britains beyond the seas falls to the navy. The security of Australasian coasts and territories stands or falls with that of these islands. The supremacy of the navy,

which preserves England inviolate, forbids the successful invasion of New Zealand, and in securing London and Liverpool, we also guarantee the safety of Melbourne and Auckland.

In addition, our mercantile marine looks to the navy for its protection. The battleships of the enemy may be brought to an engagement, and may be destroyed, or they may be obliged to take refuge in their strong naval bases, where also are the dockyards and arsenals that will enable them to refit. But, as has been shown, all the fast cruisers opposed to us cannot be thus accounted for, and probably a proportion large enough to do considerable damage will have eluded us, and will always be at large. When we consider the gigantic proportions of that mercantile marine,* we realise what a tremendous call on the efficiency of our fleets is thus made. In a subsequent chapter, the question of protection against commerce-destroying will be specially dealt with, and we need not dwell on it here further than to note how considerable a number of ships our navy will have to allocate to this part of its duty alone. It may not be the declared policy of our navy to undertake the duty of convoying either merchant vessels or transports as in days gone by. The pressure of a popular demand is, however, in a country such as ours, impossible to resist, and where, as in this case, the whole welfare and destiny of the people, individually and as a whole, are bound up with commerce, interests are so strong that they may succeed in bending the Government in their direction.

Again, there are those who point to the undefended state of some coaling-stations, and would add to the

* Amounting to a tonnage of 13,856,161 tons for the United Kingdom, according to the tables given in "Whittaker's Almanac" for 1902. That of the Colonies is given as 1,052,045, representing a total of 1935 ships. The mercantile navies of the rest of the world put together amount to a tonnage of 15,892,304 tons.

other duties of the navy that of preserving their safety. But the portion of the subject thus presented to us can be better treated in a separate chapter.

In conclusion, it may be added that to formulate the duty of the navy has been a difficult task, just because the services it has to perform are so universal and indispensable. What is the part that the air we breathe plays in our existence? What is the function of the blood in all the various actions of the body? The answer is transparently obvious in one sense, and yet a professional treatise might well be written ere the subject was exhausted. The share of the navy in Imperial defence is no less pervading and essential than those elements in our bodily existence which have just been named. The safety of our homes, the security of our colonies, the safeguarding of our commerce, depend largely upon it; without it our army cannot operate, and when it perishes our sun will set. The supremacy of our navy has become an obsession when the defence of the Empire under present conditions is considered, and this obsession is the chief obstacle to a minute inventory of all it may be called upon to do. We accept the fact that the navy is indispensable through the same instinct that tells us that we cannot walk on water.

Moreover, we gain a better insight into its many-sided usefulness when we view it in connection with the other service, or performing definite duties such as our economic condition and commercial welfare may demand. We must remember, too, that essential and indispensable are adjectives applicable to ingredients as well as integers, and that the action of ingredients is best understood when the whole mass is examined. In the course of subsequent chapters, therefore, many and diverse duties of the navy which have been but lightly touched on, or even altogether ignored, will

come to light, and in what manner the *rôles* of ships and armies are interwoven will, it is hoped, be made clear. For the present, we may sum up the subject of this chapter in a few broad strokes.

The navy must keep the highways of the ocean and communications of the Empire always open to us, and must acquire, as early as possible after war breaks out, such a mastery over the fleets of our opponents, that it may be possible to send our land forces on expeditions across the waves.

When the navy has done that, it will have attained what we know as command of the sea, and until it has established that essential condition in all schemes for the defence of the Empire, the task it is called upon to execute will remain unperformed, and the army must stand and wait for its accomplishment.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE FUNCTION OF THE ARMY

THE function of our army in Imperial defence is a subject concerning which considerable controversy has arisen and opinion been divided.

The peculiarities and physical characteristics of our Empire are—in part at anyrate—responsible for this. Its most vital portions, the heart and brain, from which the arteries and nerves of the whole body radiate, are altogether intangible by land; while the extremities—which are, however, greater in bulk than the central trunk—are united to the seats of life and activity only by so unstable and precarious a medium as the waves of the sea. Thus the conditions which govern the operations of our army are quite different from those that other armies have to meet.

No distinct and separate sphere in Imperial defence can be allotted to our soldiers, because their movements, except within our own narrow islands, are dependent on the aid of the sister service. While other nations draw merely the luxuries of life from across the seas, it is the necessities of existence which are thus brought to us. Without commerce they may droop, but we must wither. Our prosperity as a nation is dependent on our command of the highways of the world. Small wonder, then, if many have thought, or perhaps still think, that an all-powerful navy will completely secure our safety, and regard military expenditure beyond a certain level

as unnecessary waste, or a diversion of money in a wrong direction.

It will need but a little consideration to show that such views, however plausible, are fallacious. If in a possible contest between the great Powers the conditions of the struggle were the same for all, we might perhaps rest confident on the action of our navy alone, and cheerfully face an isolation where no enemy could approach us. But even should we sweep the warships of our opponent from the sea, and do substantial injury to his commerce, we may not be making much progress towards breaking his resolution or restoring peace. He may not be able to attack us, but that will not enable us to assail him. Home industries, and the commerce to which an extensive land frontier will remain open, can supply all his necessities and minor luxuries. A neutral flag will safeguard the ships that will bring to him what food and raw material he may demand in addition. The war may become inconvenient, expensive, wearisome to him; but to us it will grow ruinous, and we may finally succumb, smothered by our impenetrable armour, without having received a single scratch.

While, therefore, we may be clear in our judgment that the command of the sea must always be the basis of all schemes of defence, and while we may have complete confidence that our ships will obtain it for us when the enemy is at our gates, we must still recognise that even a predominant navy has its limitations and restrictions, and cannot alone produce decisive results.

Moreover, in such an effort as is implied by Imperial defence all the forces we can command must be called in to bear a part. The strategy we may adopt does not only deal with one arm or one service or one set of political problems. Many countries, more than one continent, two elements, are involved; the issues are enormous, the problems complex. If the armies cannot

operate where strategy directs them beyond the seas, as they may in a theatre of war which on shore may embrace hundreds of square miles, the triumphant swoop of the fastest ships is also circumscribed when the headlands of the coast loom in view. The readiness of the sailor has deservedly become proverbial, and naval brigades on land have often done us supreme service in little wars. In great conflicts, such as we now have in mind, every seaman, however, will be needed on board the vessels that will steam forth to bear the first brunt of the struggle. Frequently as the readiness of our sailors has been summoned in small wars to supplement the early efforts of an inadequate or ill-equipped land force, in the first stages of war with one of the great Powers the army will appear as the assistant of the navy.

Thus Imperial defence must be regarded from a standpoint that will enable us to take in every side of the question, and all the varying conditions which the nature of the war we engage in may impose. We must dispose of all our forces, untrammelled by prejudice or the narrow views of a particular profession. Army and navy must play into one another's hands, as in the more confined area of the battlefield the various arms of the service co-operate and combine, the chief part falling sometimes to one, and again to another, a sympathetic appreciation of the needs of others governing all.

Let us consider the case of a war with one of the great Powers first.

When I say that the army at the opening of such a great contest will be found in a *rôle* subordinate to that of the navy, I mean that it will be employed in such a way as to release the other to undertake in full force and vigour the part she has been preparing herself to play, and will need all her special strength

and skill to carry through—a part where the decisive issues of the moment must be dealt with by her, and by her alone.

We know that the primary object of our navy will be to obtain command of the sea. To swiftly obtain such command, and at the same time protect our merchant shipping in distant parts of the world, our fleets must not be required to afford local defence to any of our ports, or to hug the channel, and preserve us from panic at home. They must move out in overpowering force to meet the fleets of the enemy, and keep the seas open.

Now, however widely the strategy and tactics of land and sea warfare may differ from one another, they are at one in demanding, as a first essential to offensive action, the provision of secure bases and lines of supply.

In a tactical sense it is, of course, true that fleets and ships are more independent of their communications than land forces, that they draw no visible tail in the shape of slowly moving waggons plodding wearily after the fighting line behind them. They can carry their ammunition, food, and stores in their roomy holds, and a maximum supply will not in the least impair their swiftness or manœuvring power. But in another direction they are hampered by considerations which are more peremptory than any that confront the leader on shore. No fuel is provided by the sea; no trees can be cut down at the end of the day's march; no coal can be abstracted from the waves. Fuel is as necessary to modern warships as water is to man, and, when the theatre of war spreads over all the oceans, stages are measured by thousands of miles, and lines of communication girdle half the globe.

Moreover, nothing in the way of supplies can be

gathered as the armed force forges ahead. The wide stretches of the sea have nothing to offer in the way of plunder; no rich provinces can be robbed or requisitioned. Never can a Nelson imitate a Napoleon, and make the war support the war; or live on the country after the manner of the Revolutionary armies of France.

This fact is recognised in sea warfare, and has to be provided against, according to the same principles that govern war on land. Both theory and practice teach us, although the lesson is frequently forgotten, that in the offices of a general staff all possible theatres of war should be studied and pondered over, and that any theatre where operations are imminent should be carefully prepared beforehand with all the potentialities and contingencies of the coming campaign in view.

The military roads and posts and magazines of Frederick and Wellington have their counterpart to-day in the railway lines, rail-heads, and advanced depots of land warfare. In Imperial defence they are represented by naval bases, supply-ports, and coaling-stations placed at intervals along our lines of operation, and held secure by forces whose presence frees others for the great strategic blows of the war, just as on shore the troops told off to lines of communication enable an active army to manœuvre, confident and untrammelled by anxiety as to questions of supply.

At the outset of a struggle with a great Power the mobile force we are familiar with in military history would be represented by the navy. Its whole energies and ideas should be concentrated on carrying havoc amongst the enemy's forces, on seeking out and destroying or obliterating his ships of war—what on shore we should term his main army—not on warding off, except indirectly, damage to our trade or colonial possessions. Just as the tactics of minor combats teach us that

our aim should be to kill our enemy, and not to be contented merely to gain cover for ourselves, so our navy will fight to deal execution, swift, decisive, and permanent, on our foes, not to secure for us immunity from loss or destruction.

During this earlier stage of a great war, the army exists, then, to free our navy for such enterprising and vigorous action. It undertakes the secondary but no less honourable or important *rôle* of safe-guarding the line of communication and ensuring supply, and yields the place of protagonist for the time being to the sailors.

The garrisons of the Imperial fortresses, coaling-stations, and defended harbours are therefore found by it, such places are by it rendered secure from attack, and are held in the interests of the navy to enable our fleets to feel confident that they will always find fuel, food, ammunition, or facilities for refitment at their disposal when they seek their anchorages.

Some years ago there existed a school of thinkers, who seemed to wish that our navy should alone be responsible for these bases and ports, and which viewed with a jealous eye almost any expenditure on guns and works ashore.

On the other hand, it has perhaps with justice been asserted that a school of soldiers and politicians termed the "Bricklayers" used to revel in revetments, and could alone breathe freely in cool retreats behind portentous parapets.

A saner view seems to teach us that the ports of our Empire held for the refuge, replenishment, refitment, or repair of our ships should be rendered secure by such means as will obviate the depletion of our fighting strength in the actions where the great issues of the war must be decided, and where all the armed forces of the Empire will be called upon to make a combined effort.

We will concentrate our ships where they may meet and give battle to those of the enemy; not disseminate them along our coast-lines, waiting for the advent of an opponent who may never appear at all.

The decisive operations at the beginning of a great war will be the destruction of the hostile sea-power. To accomplish it, we shall need to gather up all our strength, and fling it into the scales at the decisive point.

While, therefore, we hold such places as Malta, Bermuda, St Lucia, or Aden, principally in the interests of the navy, so far as its needs in times of peace are concerned, a judicious application of our resources calls upon the army to defend them, and here we recognise a prominent duty or function of the army in our scheme of Imperial defence.

It may be argued, and it has indeed been asserted, that while we hold command of the sea it will be useless for hostile expeditions to attack our strong places, because they could not keep them even if they managed to capture them. It has been proved that mere wanton destruction by bombardment will effect nothing substantial, and may leave ships with empty magazines to the mercy of such antagonists as they would probably encounter after they had spent their strength in mere mischief. But surely it is not excessive anxiety that prompts us to make reasonable provision against raids on places which contain commodities so valuable to warships as coal and ammunition?

To obtain them for himself, or deprive us of such supplies, would be an enterprise that might well justify a bold commander in accepting the risks involved.

Coal has become the determining factor in the efficiency of ships, and a successful coup on a place where it was stored might place complete disablement on us, while the acquisition of what we lost might galvanise an

enemy from palsied impotency into the full vigour of manhood.

The possibility of destroying large stores of coal may be problematical, yet we shall scarcely be willing to let an enemy enter on an experiment with the fuel intended for our warships. To destroy ammunition certainly presents no insuperable difficulties; while to carry away either ammunition or coal is as feasible for an enemy as it is for ourselves.

Moreover, evasion is possible when the issue of a combat may not be in doubt; and while so valuable a prize as has been named lies open to a hostile swoop, we must certainly feel that a very material part of our interests was in jeopardy.

I have perhaps said enough to show that when our land forces are utilised to guard the supply-ports of the navy they are not being wasted.

But our Empire is the fabric of individual enterprise, and rests on a commercial basis. We cannot flourish as a great trading community if the various forms of wealth which our commercial activity accumulates cannot be stored away in many an outlying corner of our realm. A nation which exists principally on commerce must provide for the protection of its business people, and lessen the risks of war as much as possible for them. Now the strong-rooms of banks and the plunder of warehouses may well prove an alluring bait to hostile cruisers. The capture of vessels that may have sought refuge in harbour, and lie helplessly at anchor, would be an additional incentive. If supply-ports are essential to the navy, defended harbours and anchorages for the benefit of the mercantile marine can scarcely be considered less indispensable to commerce. It is through the great arteries of trade that the pulses of the Empire beat, that its life-blood ebbs and flows. When they suffer lesion, the strong arm will fall nervelessly to the

side, bear it ever so bright and sharp a weapon. The busy brain will reel and hesitate, the quick glance grow dim and fade.

While we are protected by armament, we live by trade, and the most enthusiastic soldier or sailor will find it difficult to deny that some protection must be given to such ports as Karachi and Calcutta, which are held rather in the interests of our commerce than of our naval power.

The question as to how much and what constitutes an adequate protection next presents itself, and in turn demands an answer as to the form of attack which it is proposed to guard against.

We have already learnt that a mere bombardment will promise so little substantial result that it is not greatly to be feared; is, in fact, not likely to be undertaken at all.

The danger will come from the land side, and any foe determined to do material damage, or carry away plunder of any description with him, will be compelled to send men ashore. It is to be expected, therefore, that all attempts on our coast defences from over sea will take the form of a combined attack by ships, and by a landing-party. Ships are far more valuable than human beings, and will not be risked where men may do the work, while it is only by the presence of a force of men on shore that considerable results are to be reaped.

It is from these causes that our difficulties in establishing minor coast defences spring. A very few guns, cunningly placed so as to offer little or no target to the enemy, might well deter a hostile cruiser from approaching, far less entering, a port, and but a mere handful of men, involving slight expense, would be required for their detachments. Guns of an adequate type would cost comparatively little; the preparation of their sites

and protective cover for them would only be a matter of small outlay.

But a few guns cannot do more than sweep a limited extent of coast-line, and while their attention is absorbed by the force on the water, a landing-party may assail them from an unexpected direction. While they are being masked or captured, the object of the raid may be accomplished with a comparatively small expenditure of force.

Moreover, when once we have placed a gun in position, our attitude becomes defiant, and the national pride is aroused. We have raised, as it were, the standard of our country, and must carry through the challenge which we offer to the world. So that it is manifest that the protection of a harbour or anchorage may easily involve more than at first sight appears, and that when we lay submarine mines, and place guns to defend such places, we are often obliged to look to the protection of the protectors. The tendency is one to be guarded against, and is but another example of "the little more" that has to be often sternly put away from our minds when making decisions about all military operations.

The best antidote to the evil is to be found in making due provision beforehand for the speedy removal and transfer of the defensive force, according as the strategical situation may demand. At one period the chances of an attack at a certain spot may be so small that they may be neglected, while the defence in another part may be far more vulnerable. Consultation between naval and military commanders should be able to decide where the immediate danger lies, and an elasticity in our defensive system should permit of prompt action being taken.

Perhaps it may not be unnecessary to mention here that when duties such as I have named are allotted to the army and navy, the closest co-operation between

the two services should be sought for as a first essential. There should be such an understanding between them as should make it clear to the military commander what the chances of attack are, what he should be prepared for, and when he may expect it. Above all, he should know for what length of time he may have to hold out, and when he may expect to see a relieving fleet. Since their existence depends on sea communication, the ultimate security of our supply-ports must rest on sea-power in the same way as that of the mother-country is secured by naval strength.

But while it is certain that neither the nation at home nor the garrisons abroad can hold out permanently without the help of a fleet, they may yet survive for a time, and as long as ammunition and supplies do not run short, may keep the flag flying.

With time on our side, the most desperate situation may be retrieved. The political horizon may clear; the unexpected, as is inevitable, supervene. It is no disparagement of sea-power to make provision against a temporary collapse, or to try and tide over the results of an unforeseen disaster.

To gain time is a legitimate reason for the construction of fixed defences—time for our stamina to assert its power, time for us to recover ourselves, time which, more than once in our history, has been our surest ally.

This question of time brings with it some considerations as to the size of garrisons at such places as our great Mediterranean fortresses and more important naval bases, which must not be left out of sight, and are sometimes not fully understood.

In the first place, a considerable garrison will, in itself, be a deterrent to an attack at the beginning of a great war. If a force which can be reckoned by hundreds holds an important point, an enterprising foe will not consider that surprise and capture are beyond

what may be regarded as a legitimate risk of war. It is a very different matter to organise and despatch over sea a raiding force of, say, 5000 men, than to embark an army corps. The collecting together of the necessary transports would neither be so difficult, nor would it attract so much attention. Nor would the same interests be involved, nor would the covering naval force need to be so powerful.

Malta, held only by a battalion, might tempt the daring of 5000 men—while guarded as at present, not less than six times that number would probably be told off for its capture. The latter force could not be collected and despatched without our being apprised of what was in contemplation, and the whole operation might well assume such dimensions as would cause the central Mediterranean to become the decisive point in the theatre of war. A great fleet action, on the issue of which the feasibility of attacking the place must depend, would be brought about. And a great fleet action is what our navy would most probably desire to see.

While, too, an expedition of 5000 men might evade us, the larger force could not hope to do so.

Again, a place well garrisoned will be capable of a more prolonged defence than in a case where the defending force is huddled together in a small closed work, able to ward off the rush of a storming-party, but a mere shell-trap when subjected to bombardment by modern ordnance firing high explosive shell.

To effectively bombard a wide area is very difficult, wasteful of ammunition, and does not promise decisive results, but a small work supplies a very different and more vulnerable target.

Again, were our navy not so completely successful in its first encounters as we expect it to be, it might, with opportunity to refit and receive reinforcements, easily

retrieve its position. A great fortress, well provisioned and supplied with ammunition, would then afford the necessary shelter and accommodation for repair; but to be of use, it must have been prepared for the emergency in times of peace. At the outbreak of a great war it will not be possible to send reinforcements across the sea until we have established a mastery upon it. The navy will be too much absorbed in its more important duties to undertake the safeguarding of convoys, and we shall scarcely venture to send many transports away unescorted. Thus our garrisons abroad in war time must be self-dependent, perhaps for weeks, and during that period disease and casualties will have exacted their due percentage. Some margin above the bare necessities of duty must therefore be allowed for, and a provision for wastage made.

A civil population is also a factor in the defence of a fortified post which has to be reckoned with, and space over and above what the military exigencies demand has to be prepared for its accommodation. Politics, too, exert an influence in apportioning the garrison to a place like Malta. Finally, it must be borne in mind that while a perimeter may be contracted as a garrison wastes, it is by no means easy to enlarge it after an enemy has established himself in position. Tactical, sanitary, and political considerations have all to be taken into account when we determine the extent over which our lines of defence must stretch, while the numbers of the garrisons have to be apportioned to the length of front to be defended. Such are some of the reasons that govern our decision in garrisoning the strategic forts that we have dotted over the globe, and which compel us to keep up a considerable portion of our army for their protection. The duties involved are not particularly attractive to the army, nor do they offer good training for young troops; but the more

secure we render the places committed to our charge, the more freely and boldly may our ships proceed on their proper and more exhilarating mission.

But the naval victories we look for from them—and it is to be hoped that without presumption we may count on such—must be but stepping-stones to wider enterprises, and the momentum of success must not be allowed to exhaust itself in the deepness of the sea.

Weak in point of numbers as our army unfortunately is, we should not in that fact alone find ground for either apathy or inactivity. On the contrary, it is owing to this very circumstance that the lessons of war appeal to us most forcibly for exertion, and give us confidence when they show how the strategic counterstroke can be made an effective weapon in the hands of the weak.

It is true that the area of the British Empire is 11,000,000 square miles, while that of Great Britain and Ireland is only 120,000. That fact, and all it implies, constitutes, however, no argument for an attitude of nerveless expectancy on our part, but urges us, unless we would be blind to what has occurred in the past, to brace ourselves more firmly than ever for swift and vigorous action.

Swiftness and vigour, however, are not the only factors which make for victory. Secrecy is of equal importance, and has been an essential element of success in such operations as I have in mind; and here sea favours us, for an army on board ship leaves no traces behind it, and once on the waters, the uncertainty as to where it may next make its appearance constitutes in itself a menace and deterrent. When Napoleon sailed for Egypt, our forefathers were completely puzzled as to his destination; and the hostile fleets actually passed within sixty miles of one another without their proximity to one another being discovered. Luck aided Napoleon, no doubt; and Nelson had to complain of want of

frigates. But luck is inevitable in war, and, I suppose, from what we hear said, that want of cruisers will be complained of in the future too. In this case we have an example of ships conferring mobility and secret movement on armies. Two years later, marching power and audacity gave the same results on shore, and Napoleon swooped on upper Italy across the Alps just as he surprised Egypt when he swept across the water. Had Napoleon been possessed of command of the sea, no doubt a sea voyage, and not a mountain march, would have led up to Marengo. The lack of ships forced Napoleon, as it had Hannibal, to traverse weary miles of road, when a Power that commanded the sea might have sailed at ease over far greater distances. But the principles at work are the same in all the cases. Mobility, whether by land or sea, is the antidote to ponderous armaments.

In 1862 the Confederates, following the wise counsel of generals who had studied and understood war, by mobility and energy redressed the balance in numbers against their side.

The light of nature, and the character of the country has enabled our enemies in South Africa to turn the advantage they possessed no less skilfully to account. In a world-struggle our supremacy at sea endows us with a mobility, the equivalent, on a large scale, of that which good marching, and plenty of horses, gave in the other cases. If we apply the lessons rightly, we shall sally out from our bays and channels, carry the war away from our own shores, and teach our opponents that he who sets out to attack an enemy must first secure the safety of his own possessions.

From Providence we have derived a position strategically valuable as the ports and trade-routes of the world are to-day distributed. The predominance of our navy will give us that facility and rapidity of movement

which is an essential to offensive strategy. A combination of both mobility and a favourable position places the strategic counterstroke within our grasp.

I do not mean that we are to enter into the turmoil of continental warfare such as absorbed much of our energies during the eighteenth century. In the face of nations in arms dreams of conquests melt away.

Neither can we hope to derive advantage from foreign alliances. No foreigners will want to secure our greatness; and it is only with that end in view that we would ever entertain their advances. I fear we can hope for little from goodwill or sympathy. We shall do best to trust in our own strength alone, and undertake nothing we cannot ourselves carry through.

Nor need we despair.

Although the hearths and homes of an opponent may never be menaced by us, he may have colonies in which our presence might constitute a sore so galling to his material interests and his pride, that he would be forced to try and eject us at any cost. A compact and formidable British force, conveyed and supplied by an all-powerful navy, would not easily be disposed of, while the support of the war by an opponent not enjoying sea-power might well prove an insuperable difficulty.

The sphere of usefulness of our army, when once the waves are ours, is by no means, therefore, contracted to a mere garrisoning of fixed defences. Indeed, the conditions of our national life are, in any case, such that a protracted war with a great Power would, even if the laurels usually fell to ourselves, be only less disastrous to us than a swift defeat.

It is quite possible that the question of food-supply may prove less difficult of solution than some suppose. The self-denial and self-sacrifice of our people may encourage them to bear a loss of luxuries, or even some deprivations of the necessaries of life, with equanimity.

Raw materials are, however, indispensable to our manufactures, and an interference with their supply might close factories and diminish or disperse wages. The certainty of war-prices for bread and meat, and a simultaneous reduction or disappearance of the wages that formed the support of families, is not a factor on which to base anticipations of a prolonged struggle. Undoubtedly, some vigorous measures to end the war would have to be undertaken. Otherwise the early victories of our navy might well prove of a Pyrrhic type, and leave our country in a condition as deplorable as that of a nation which had felt the heaviness of a conquering hand.

It is evident, then, that we must do more than render futile an invasion of our shores, or preserve the advanced ports and communications of our Empire intact. We must have a fixed standard up to which, in the first place, and at all costs, we must keep our navy; but none the less must we then organise an army equal to the no less important duties that Imperial defence will demand from it.

The standard by which the strength of the navy can be gauged is known. It is less easy to determine that of the army; but the following scale, if adhered to honestly, will perhaps suffice.

In the first place, we need the presence of such regular forces at home as will be sufficient to train and supply drafts for the units we maintain beyond the seas as garrisons for India and our colonies, and to hold the strategic points of the Empire that I have already referred to.

Organised units must also remain at home, such as will render it hopeless for any enemy to throw a raiding expedition into our territories without the certainty of defeat staring him in the face. But most especially must we have an army such as can provide a well-equipped

and easily-transferable force available at short notice for the defence of any frontier of the Empire which may be endangered, and ready to undertake an expedition against any of the possessions of our enemies on which sound strategy may call us to deliver an effective counterstroke.

To undertake such a counterstroke would manifestly be impossible until our navy rode the seas supreme, and had accounted for the forces afloat that might endanger its success. It is for this reason that the duty of the army in protecting the bases of the navy have first been dwelt upon. While the defence of our homes rests primarily on a predominant navy, so in not less degree, and for precisely the same reasons, does the feasibility of offensive warfare by land depend upon it.

Hostile nations can indulge in no visions of an invasion of these islands till they command the highway that gives access to them; but no more can we hope to carry the war into hostile territory till we have attained a similar predominance.

We should have, however, every right to hope that in the future naval superiority shall be as completely the appanage of England as it has been in the past. It is, at anyrate, within our power to make certain of that; and therefore the provision of a force adequate for a great counterstroke should, especially in view of the perils with which a protracted war is fraught for us, form a consideration in Imperial defence only secondary to that which compels us to preserve our navy supreme.

To reinforce our troops in India or Canada or South Africa or Egypt, or to provide means for such a counterstroke, we should require at least three army corps prepared for embarkation at short notice without levying calls on the efficiency of other units, and appropriating supplies either of personnel or material

intended for other portions of our military system. In addition, at anyrate, one cavalry division should be held ready for immediate mobilisation. This force is a considerably greater one than what a few years ago would have been held sufficient for service abroad. But our experiences in South Africa have shown us what demands modern war will make upon us, and for the future we shall have to think in brigades and not in battalions.

The multiplication and improvements of modern armaments have also totally altered the relationship in which we formerly stood to semi-barbarous nations, with whom we may not improbably become embroiled. An Abyssinian war would now tax our strength as much as that we entered on so lightly with the Boers more than two years ago. Dusky warriors, superior in mobility and physique to Europeans, become, when equally well armed, even more dangerous opponents than white men. We have no longer on our side the advantage that armament used to give to civilisation; we can no longer count on discipline restoring the balance between numbers. Discipline and method have ceased to be the monopoly of white men, and Europeans have lately been selling their birthright in the shape of rifles and guns and ammunition to the highest bidder, whatever complexion he might wear. The era of small wars is rapidly passing away, and in future we must be prepared, even when dealing with those whom we term uncivilised, to send a force against them such as before the days of universal service would have been sufficient to turn the scale on the battlefields of Europe.

It is to be remembered, too, that save only in Australasia our frontiers are now co-terminous, or practically co-terminous, with those of Powers which possess a command of men and means of transport such as will

compel us to deploy forces of the dimensions I have named. Finally, now that the war in South Africa is over, we shall have to hold what we have won with a garrison, for many years, at least, four times as great as that which before the war we deemed sufficient.

In the present state of politics and armaments all over the world, three army corps and a cavalry division ready for immediate mobilisation do not constitute a force which in common prudence can be termed excessive.

Behind these first three army corps, three others, largely composed of our auxiliary forces, are to be organised to furnish drafts and train troops in war time for our establishments abroad, provide for home defence, and reinforce our armies engaged with the enemy.

In addition, provision for garrisons and mounted infantry in the shape of yeomanry will also be made.

The provision of such organised forces, besides our Indian and Colonial garrisons, is to be taken as the minimum that the protection of our Empire now demands. Events not by any means improbable might suddenly so modify the strategical situation abroad that we might be called upon to augment them.

For example, should an outbreak of aggressive energy in Central Asia bring about certain eventualities, an addition of at least 60,000 men to our Indian garrison, half of whom would be British, might well become imperative.

When we consider such forces as I have indicated, when we reflect on the vastness of the theatre of war, on the immensity of the issues involved, on the great *rôles* open to either service, is there any room left for any petty jealousies between the two?—between the right and left arms of the strong man armed? Of course, I put any starving of one service for the benefit of the other out of the question. The navy must always stand at that height of efficiency which has been laid down in

the carefully-considered projects of our experts. Then should the case of the army be similarly and impartially considered: the money spent being in the interests of the Empire as a whole, and not ever regarded as a concession to the claims or prejudices of any particular service.

It is not with us any longer a mere question of the inviolability of our shores or of the safety of London. It is no dream of aggression or pompous triumphs that conjures up these demands for adequate and efficient land forces. It is a matter of preserving such trade and prosperity to our working-classes as they have been brought up to expect, of handing down to our posterity the inheritance, whole and unimpaired, which has devolved on us from the courage and labour and self-sacrifice of our forefathers.

That the predominance of our navy is the foundation stone on which the security of our Empire—our very existence as a great power—rests, is absolutely incontrovertible. It is equally true, however, that we cannot live and thrive, no matter to what pre-eminence our navy may attain, if we maintain one gun or horse or man fewer than the establishments I have foreshadowed.

On the other hand, never let us forget that these battalions, batteries, and squadrons cannot secure our shores from blockade, and cannot leave them without the help of the navy. We can neither reinforce our garrison abroad, nor attack those of our opponents, unless we can count on a secure passage across the seas.

Our army and navy are, in fact, complementary to each other. To get the fullest effect from either they must work in unison, and their co-operation must be genial and intelligent. In any broad view of Imperial defence their interests are seen to be in common rather

than antagonistic, and while the Empire would perish without the one, it could not exist without the other.

Yet just as empire involves for us possessions stretching over more than one element, open to attack and demanding defence both by land and sea, so must the military (using the word in its broad sense) forces of our Empire be adapted to operations which are not confined and hemmed in by the features of physical geography. Sea and land forces, trained and accustomed to act in combination until they merge together into what may be regarded as our Imperial force, offer to us, however, the very weapon our necessities demand, and the testimony of military history tells us how vast a result a combined military and naval expedition to foreign shores may bring about.

It was the "Spanish ulcer" that first sapped Napoleon's strength. The comparatively few British troops that we landed in Spain first taught the nations of the Continent how the French legions might be successfully withstood. The triumphs of Vittoria and Waterloo, not those of an invincible navy, finally brought the struggle to an end. In the Crimean period we see the army fastening on the huge flank of a powerful opponent, and wearing down, by the slow pressure of reinforcements from over sea, the stubborn persistence of the Czar.

Again, at a more recent epoch, the navy and army co-operate in Egypt, secure our route to India, and bring good government and prosperity to the subjects of the Khedive.

Without committing myself to the recommendation of such a course of strategy, it is pertinent to point out that the shores of her potential foes offer to that nation whose sea-power dominates the waters, coast-lines many thousands of miles in extent, opening to her numerous footholds from which an invasion of hostile territory could be launched, with far greater security of base and lines of

communication than any power making war on land in Europe could count upon. When it is remembered how anxiously the frontier between France and Germany, only some two hundred miles in extent, is watched, how much in doubt France stood as to where to look for the inroad of the foe in the opening days of the last disastrous campaign in those regions, we can gain some notion of how mighty a power a nation wields which may choose her own point of entry on such a front, and what a menace an invading force, able to move freely wherever steam and waves can take it, may become.

To guard such a frontier against so ubiquitous a foe might fairly exhaust the energies and resources of a commander, even when he could count his battalions and regiments by hundreds.

In this connection the Black Sea has often been referred to, and it has frequently figured in suggestions for the employment of our army in Europe. It yields, however, but an illustration of what is true in many other parts of the world also. Wherever, in fact, hostile territory, or what may be converted into hostile territory, is co-terminous with the ocean, there lurks the same menace from the nation that is mistress of the sea.

If Northern Persia abuts on the Caspian and the Central Asian dominions of the Czar, Southern Persia marches with Britannia's realm, and strategic points are open to enterprises from sea as well as land.

But to discuss the possibilities for combined naval and military expeditions here would be a digression from the subject more immediately before us, and I need say no more of them than that they would offer opportunities to our army which must be reckoned amongst its duties when we consider its place in Imperial defence.

Home defence, again, is a part of the subject which, if adequately dealt with, demands separate treatment,

and will receive it in a subsequent chapter. Yet the important function which our army is to perform in it may here be briefly referred to. The defence of our shores is primarily the duty of the navy, but the form of defence adopted, owing to the anomalous conditions under which we live, must be an active not a passive one.

As I have already said, I view superiority at sea to be the fundamental condition of our system of national defence; but while the navy may be termed our right, the army is our left arm, and is as essential in any well-considered plan as is the other. Moreover, an interval of time may elapse before it is clear to whom superiority at sea is to belong. The reasons which have been given for strong garrisons to hold our naval bases apply with equal force to the case of our home defences also.

The coaling-stations and supply-ports are the links in the great chain that bind our dominions beyond the seas to our shores. But while we see to it that every link is firm and true, we must not forget to make sure that the shore end of the chain does not fall into the enemy's hands. No prudent statesman would be content with nothing at home behind the navy. If naval bases are to be fortified to gain time, it is necessary to make our central citadel secure against unforeseen contingencies also. Otherwise, the appearance of a few hostile cruisers off our coasts would create a panic. Our fleets would be ordered back to home waters, and, in place of going to meet their opponent, they would have to wait for him to come to them.

I am far from believing, too, that even heavy naval reverses need necessarily prove the death-knell of our country. It is not probable that the whole of our navy will ever be wiped out all at once. Even a

great defeat is widely removed from annihilation, and if a successful action should ever enable a foreigner to get a footing in the kingdom, I am far from thinking that we would be forced to strike our colours. On the contrary, his advent should be the signal for such a display of resolution and activity as would prevent his penetrating very deeply into our territory or his ever getting out of it again.

The danger of a raid on the United Kingdom is, in one respect, more imminent than elsewhere in the Empire, because we must remember that to reach most of our Colonies and fortresses abroad our enemies must traverse long stretches of sea, and must organise expeditions which will have to operate far away from their bases of supply. But the enemy is at the gates of the United Kingdom; comparatively few miles of sea would separate his expeditionary force from its home base, from which men and material might be poured in practically unlimited numbers to his reinforcement.

In a few hours a steamship may easily cover the distance that separates our south coast from potentially hostile ports. When the leap is so small, an enemy may gather himself together to attempt it. The mere fact of his making preparation to do so would, unless complete confidence in home defence were felt amongst our people, be enough to spoil the plan of campaign which our navy would have in view.

With an organised and efficient army in the United Kingdom ready to meet the emergency, invasion would assume the character of a forlorn hope, and it would not be entertained by any responsible statesman. Such an army we need, as before, in order to release the navy from guard-duty at home, and free it for its wider duties far away from our shores.

We find, then, that we may summarise the function

of the army in our scheme of Imperial defence in the following brief paragraphs:—

1. To defend India and our colonial possessions which are without local forces of their own.

2. To hold the naval bases throughout the world which supply our ships with coal, stores, and ammunition; provide them with facilities for refitment or repair, or give them shelter when menaced by superior force—and this, when we are at war with a great power, will form a duty hardly second to the first-named.

3. In minor wars to furnish a compact, easily-transferable force to provide punitive expeditions or forces to deal with the savage races with which we may come into collision.

4. When we are engaged with more formidable antagonists, to place at our disposal the equivalent of three army corps, with cavalry in addition, with which to reinforce the troops defending India or our Colonies, or to take offensive action as may be needed beyond the seas.

5. To ensure the presence of such troops at home as may provide drafts and reinforcements to those abroad.

6. To give security and confidence at home and enable our ships to operate where they will.

But with reference to the last-named duty, it must be observed that the repulse of an invader of these shores by the army is a contingency only vaguely to be hinted at. The crisis, which would make such action necessary, would be so momentous as to shake the whole edifice that has laboriously been piled together by centuries of industry. We cannot contemplate a struggle involving such issues with equanimity. However supreme a navy, however adequate an army we may possess, we must never let it get to such straits

with us; and when we discuss the question of how to deal with such an eventuality, when obliged to trust to our army alone, the wisest counsel is also the briefest —that which sums up the situation in the words:

"It must never be."

# CHAPTER V

## COMBINED NAVAL AND MILITARY OPERATIONS

IN the following pages it is not proposed to discuss the action of naval brigades with other troops on land, nor of small raiding-parties despatched from warships to undertake the carrying away, damage, or destruction of an enemy's property on shore. The first are impromptu efforts, rarely deliberately planned, and often only entered on to eke out a little further the attenuated forces which our national optimism and love of economy magnify into a sufficiency for some enterprise that, it is secretly hoped, may fizzle out before it attains the dimensions of a "small" war.

Expeditions of the latter nature are usually left to the navy alone, and are to be classed with the cutting-out and raiding enterprises that enlivened the monotony of the old wars.

We want to speak, now, of more important operations; such as may influence the progress of a struggle waged on Imperial lines, when we strike to bring about great results, and aim only at such points as are strategically valuable.

In considering the subject it is necessary to bear in mind that the conditions under which war is conducted in the present day differ so widely from those which obtained even fifty years ago, that considerable caution in drawing deductions from previous experience is desirable.

Railroads and telegraphs have come to the assistance of the defence; steam and science in shipbuilding to

that of the attack. Invasion in the past has often been a war of communications, and victory has ultimately remained with those that had the best. Water-transport, where the sea is held secure, is better than that by land even now, and was immeasurably superior to it when armies had to rely on waggons and horses instead of railways and traction-engines for their supply. Our communications, and those of the French in the Crimea, were infinitely superior to those of the Russians, although the latter were operating in their own country, because the road system of our opponents was defective, and no lines of rail fed their armies.

Behind the Allies steamships brought up the resources of the world.

At the close of the war, when our arrangements had been improved, the Russian reinforcements, having traversed many a weary mile of road, arrived at the front, wearied, and trailing behind them the huge percentage of sick and disabled men that war, even before battle, exacts, to meet men fresh and buoyant and well-fed, carried to the scene of action in comfortable ships.

Had a railway system connected the shores of the Black Sea with the heart of the empire, all the vital force of the country would have coursed through its wide ramifications to the part assailed, and it may well have been that the shorter lines of supply and the greater numbers would have triumphed. As it was, paradoxical as it may appear, the side farthest from its ultimate bases triumphed, and did so because it was in more effective connection with them.

There can be little doubt that to land a force in the European territories of a great Power would, in fact, now prove a far more hazardous operation than it has been in the past. A force disembarking in an enemy's country has to secure its base and its lines of communication, and will shed so much of its fighting

strength in the effort that, after these channels have been made secure, a mobile force strong enough to penetrate at all deeply into the country will very often not be forthcoming. On the other hand, the enemy can deploy his whole available strength against the weakened force, while telegraphs may summon, and locomotives draw to the battlefield, men from far away in the interior. These, again, can be supplied by railways with an ease that communications in hostile territory will always lack when the coast is left behind.

Further, it is probable that the invaders will be weak in cavalry, because the transport of horses demands much space on board ship. Not only that, but after a sea-voyage horses arrive weak and unfit for sustained effort. Both in numbers and mobility, therefore, the defenders should have the advantage as regards cavalry; and surprises and daring raids, such as are necessary to successful attack, are not to be looked for under the circumstances all at once. Unable to gain the information as to the country or the enemy which it is the duty of cavalry to obtain, an immediate and vigorous advance will not probably be attempted. Hesitation will add to the delay inevitable while the process of disembarkation is going on; while, on the other side, every available man will be hurrying from distant and undisturbed provinces to the spot. The circumstances of the moment, in other respects, must indeed be favourable to make the scales equal when such special advantages benefit one side alone.

When Sir John Moore's army, in 1808, was met by an overpowering French force in the north of Spain, Napier has told us that he might have avoided the combat then, only to reappear in the southern provinces under more favourable conditions; and has rightly appreciated the sea-power which might move Moore's troops in a few days to a spot that marching could not bring

their opponents to in weeks. It was northwards, in the event, that Moore changed his base, and we all know the story of Corunna and of the British Army carried away by the ships from the clutches of the French, as in Homeric battles the intervention of a guardian deity snatched many a hero from the overpowering fury of his opponent. Thus, to Moore, either way of escape, north or south, was open because the power of the sea, an agency beyond the control of strategy on land, hovered over the combat, and threw protection round its child. The balance of advantage will still, in future, be with the troops that operate from beyond the sea, but nothing like to the same extent as was the case when the assistance of steam could not be invoked to redress the bias against the land force.

On the other hand, it may be argued that the introduction of steam has facilitated attack because ships are now independent of the wind, and their movements can be arranged with a nicety which with sailing-vessels was impossible. The progress in naval construction has also substituted large for small transports, and the proportion of ships to men is now far smaller than it has been in the past. This enormously lightens the task of the admiral, who has to provide for the escorting of the expedition, in spite of the fact that the speed and precision of movement of cruisers has grown also, and surpasses that of almost any transports. The merchant-steamers of to-day are, nevertheless, big and fast too: independent of wind, they are more easily kept together, and none should be cut off by an enemy hovering round. Yet again, it is said that warships cannot accommodate troops as they used to do in the past, although their capacity in this respect is probably greatly underrated. I feel it is somewhat rash of me to offer an opinion on such a point, but I believe that, for short voyages, as

many as 800 men might still be stowed away in a battleship without more inconvenience or discomfort than is inseparable from, and expected on, active service. Formerly the capacity of warships in this respect was very great. In 1854 the French fleet carried more than 20,000 men, "the *Montebello* accommodated upwards of 1400 men in addition to her crew, while the *Valmy* had on board 3000 men in all. In evacuating the Crimea the *Queen* embarked two companies of the 42nd; there were on board, also, a battery of artillery, and the whole of the 77th and 90th regiments."* The experience of the recent war in South Africa has certainly shown us that where ten ships were formerly required for the conveyance of stores two, perhaps, will now suffice.

As regards the disembarkation of men, however, the big ships, few in number, have certain disadvantages. They draw more water, and must therefore lie further from the shore. They have an aggregate of fewer boats and fewer gangways, and it is not easy to get men quickly off them. It is more difficult, also, to dispose of one large ship-load of men than several small ones, just as a large crowd cannot be dispersed so easily as smaller assemblies.

When a choice as to a point of entry has to be made, strategy will direct her blow where the land communications of the defender are ill-adapted to meet it, and in highly-civilised countries it must be confessed that such places are not easily found. An expedition by sea against European territory is not, indeed, to be considered as an enterprise promising good results except when, after a war has been a long time in progress, the exhaustion of an opponent might leave him open to it. At such a moment the prospect of a descent on their own coasts might so work on the

* "Military Expeditions beyond the Seas," by Col. G. Furse, C.B.

minds of a people, weakened and distressed by the privations and reverses already endured, that results greater than abstract calculations would look for might be achieved.

But the war policy of our Empire should not be content to wait for such an opening. A protracted war is the very thing that, at all hazards, we should desire to avoid, and an expedition, which in the case of any other Power would only be undertaken as a last resource or as a subsidiary operation, might, in the case of a nation so powerful at sea as we are, form the central feature of our strategic plan.

Even then, the obtrusion of a British force into European territories would probably not commend itself to a British Government. It might well, however, seek some hostile territory less centrally placed where attack could be delivered with greater advantage to us.

The choice of the spot should aim at obtaining the following advantages:—

The objective should be one at such a distance from the main territories of our enemy, and so imperfectly linked with them, that the balance should not swing against us when the struggle, as it ultimately must, came to hinge on excellence of communications.

We, being the nation with the most perfect water communications while we hold command of the sea, and, thanks to the size of our mercantile marine, having more means of transport by sea at our disposal than any other Power, would fight at a maximum advantage when we compelled a foe to engage us in a position where he would depend to a great extent on sea communication also.

The attack of an important colony, or valuable naval base, would offer such an objective to Imperial strategy; but before developing our plan it would be necessary to rightly gauge the value that the enemy would set on the territory which we proposed to invade.

The colony or base which is to be the object of our attack must be one in the preservation of which the whole pride and prestige, as well as the interests, of the hostile nation are involved.

The loss of some coaling-station, of whose name and existence many of the lower orders might be ignorant, could be cheerfully borne. The seizure of a newly-acquired colony of doubtful commercial value could be glossed over, palliated, and forgotten; but the loss of an old-established and historic settlement would be a humiliation, to escape from which a proud nation would set all its strength at hazard.

To produce any substantial impression we must make our enemy fight for some such stake as Cuba was to Spain and South Africa was to ourselves. Every Power which has acquired dominions beyond the seas has such possessions. It is not necessary to lay one's finger on the map and point them out in public; it is enough to say that an opening in the armour of our potential enemies might be found. We do not forget, however, that any war we indulge in will be defensive in purpose. Our foreign policy will never be aggressive; we are content to hold what we have already got, although in accordance with the rules that guide a sound defence we may plan a counterstroke.

Conversely, while the invasion of our islands is a contingency which we may perhaps regard as remote, we have given hostages to fortune all over the globe, and war against us would take the form of an attack on these. To meet the assault we should probably be compelled to counter-attack, and in making our choice of an objective we must consider whether the capture we propose to effect will be of sufficient importance to call the main effort of the enemy from our possessions to the defence of his own. The mere

acquisition of territory will not benefit us. If our assault does not make him loosen his grip on our dependency it will have been made in vain.

Therefore when we do strike we must strike, vigorously and heavily, if not at the body of our opponent, at anyrate at such a limb as he cannot lose without becoming a cripple.

A more definite indication of objectives is neither expedient nor necessary in these pages. It is manifest that political considerations, and many another factor of the moment, must govern the decision of the Ministry which in practice approves of and directs the strategy of the war. It is more profitable to deal with principles than examples and let the circumstances of the moment govern their application.

Combined naval and military expeditions might then be undertaken by us with any of the following objects in view :—

Firstly, the attack and seizure of the enemy's ports or arsenals.

The necessity for such action will probably arise in the future because of the difficulty which now exists in effectively blockading a port. While, as has been noted in the previous chapter, the speed and certainty of movement which steam has brought with it have rendered escape easier, the blockading ships have lost many advantages owing to the disappearance of sails.

I need not recapitulate what has already been said on the subject, but the factor of speed which steam has introduced into naval warfare is alone enough to render more difficult a task which taxed all the energies of our seamen a century ago. There is a greater extent of coast-line to be watched also, and our potential opponents are relatively stronger than they used to be. Should a combination against us

call upon us to blockade many harbours, it is easy to understand that the demand on our powers might grow to prohibitive proportions, and we can appreciate the forethought which already tells us that we are setting ourselves a hopeless task.

In this connection the experiences of the American war of secession are full of interest to us.

The first proclamation establishing a blockade of the Southern ports was issued six days after Fort Sumter succumbed. Eight days later the blockade was extended to the whole coast-line of the Confederacy. The direct distance thus covered was more than three thousand five hundred miles; the shore-line following indentations was nearly six thousand eight hundred miles in length, while the shore-line of the islands to be watched added another five thousand miles of this huge total. Within this distance were one hundred and eighty-five river and harbour openings, which it was proposed to close to commerce. Twenty-six steamers and sixteen sailing-vessels—of which three only were at the time in the waters of the Northern States — and twenty-seven ships fit for service, but lying at the different navy yards, were all the Federal Government had available for the purpose in hand.

With this inadequate force the great blockade began; but ship after ship was added to the force, until at the close of the war six hundred were employed on it. Even these were not enough to completely close the Southern ports. Though over one thousand prizes were made by the blockading squadrons during the year, the efforts to run the blockade were continued till the last Confederate port had been captured.*

If steam has made it easier for hostile ships to elude observation, it has, on the other hand, made movements and communications by sea more certain and more

* "The American Navy," by Charles Morris, p. 71, *et seq.*

easily arranged for. It has rendered the sea both a better road and a more secure base.

Granted that an assault on an enemy's fleet in harbour might, owing to the formidable land defences which would usually shelter it, be an enterprise to which we should not care to commit ourselves in the same spirit in which we entered on the siege of Sebastopol, the destruction of raiders on our mercantile marine in their lairs and resting-places might easily be worth our while.

Foreigners have more than once found that their shipping was by no means safe from us, even when in port. Drake destroyed the Spanish ships in Cadiz, and we seized the Danish fleet in 1809 by a joint naval and military expedition conducted most successfully on a fairly large scale.

But we may need not only to seize but to permanently occupy the port selected, and again military history offers us instances where such operations were accomplished with complete success. When during the American war of secession the Federals captured and held the forts and harbours of the Southerners along the Atlantic coast and Gulf of Mexico—such as Hatteras Inlet, Newberne, Roanoke Island, Pensacola, and New Orleans—they gave us some examples which are worthy of our attention. It is true that they enjoyed absolute supremacy at sea, but that advantage we may also hope to possess; it is more important for us to discriminate between expeditions conducted as isolated enterprises leading to only local results, and those undertaken in conjunction with armies working on shore, and forming part of the general strategic plan on which the whole course of the campaign was being carried out. In another American war, of less glorious memory, we also had seized port after port along the sea-board of our

opponents, but without substantial results, because none of the operations were calculated to affect the main hostile forces and the great issues of the war.

Another object that might call for an expedition such as we have in mind would be the invasion and occupation of territory which might be of strategic value for us, or which might, in the hands of a hostile Power, prove a thorn in our side. Such expeditions, I mean, as those by which we seized Gibraltar and Malta, or the French occupied Cape Breton Isle when they were the possessors of Canada. Or again, as in 1882, when we were obliged to intervene in Egypt in the interests of our Indian trade and the security of the Suez Canal.

But with us the most usual form of combined action between army and navy will be furnished by those expeditions against savage or semi-barbarous nations with which our interests all over the world frequently bring us into collision, and of which other nations have also had experience.

Our expeditions to China in 1840 and in 1860, the first French expedition to Algeria, their descent on Tunis in 1881, our invasion of Abyssinia in 1866, and the recent Chinese war, are some examples which might be multiplied from the records of the past, and are sure to be added to in the future.

But in such instances as these the superiority of armament possessed by the ships engaged has spoilt the interest of the combined operation, and we will pass on to campaigns in which the naval operations were more sustained and prominent, because their full powers were evoked by the character of the opposition experienced.

Ships have naturally had their greatest chance when the seashore did not round in the sphere of their activities and when the combined power of the two

services was able to make itself felt long after the operations of disembarkation had been accomplished. Such occasions were found when the navy has been able to accompany and assist the army far inshore. They can only be afforded when the landing takes place at the mouth of a waterway leading inland, and for this reason the mouth of a navigable river is often the most favourable point for disembarkation which can be selected.*

For an illustration of the value that rivers may be to invaders we need not go beyond the influence exerted by such waterways as the Mississippi, Tennessee, Cumberland, and Ohio during the American war of secession. The capture of New Orleans by the Federals meant much more than a victory which gave possession of an important port. It enabled the army to co-operate with the United States Army, and render the most important assistance to the soldiers. A better example of a combined effort it would be difficult to find; for, when New Orleans fell, the Mississippi was opened to the Federal ships of war as far up as Port Hudson. Even beyond that point progress, though a little precarious, was no means impossible, while the Confederate ports on the lower Mississippi could, now the great waterway had been gained, be assailed both by water and land.

* Sir Arthur Wellesley appreciated the advantage of water-transport as much as any man. During the inglorious campaign in the Low Countries in 1794, Lord Moira asked his advice as to how best he might join the Duke of York. Wellesley told him he would save both risk and time by re-embarking his troops at Ostend and taking them right up the Scheldt or Maes to the nearest point.

"However, he would not do it, but set off marching along the great canal, choosing most luckily the opposite side to the French who tried to intercept him. He left me with my brigade of 3000 men to settle matters at Ostend and then to come on as quick as I could. I obeyed his instructions as to Ostend, and then felt so sure it was best to go round by sea that I re-embarked, and actually reached the Duke of York some days before him."—Quoted from Sir Herbert Maxwell's "Life of Wellington," Vol. i. p. 11.

Nor did the strategical importance of the great river end here. Kentucky was a doubtful state. To the north of it lay Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio, supporters of the Union: on the south it was bordered by Tennessee with opposite sympathies. A state so situated could not remain neutral, for its neutrality must sooner or later be disregarded by one party or another in the struggle. Now, on the west of Kentucky the mighty Mississippi formed the frontier. Through its borders to join the great stream flowed the Cumberland and the Tennessee, forming water communications of the first importance. When Kentucky threw in its lot with the Union States the valley of the Mississippi and its tributaries became available for operations, and the waterways supplied by the Ohio and the other two streams just mentioned gave the invading force facilities which no other communications could have furnished. Railways conveying food and stores behind armies have come to be regarded as almost indispensable; at any-rate, locomotives and trucks are enormously superior to waggons and horses or any other form of land-transport. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that a river such as those in question is, for transport purposes, as much superior to a line of railway as the latter is to an ordinary road.

The carrying power of a great stream is practically unlimited: in comparison to it that of a railway is quite small.

The volume of a river's flow is intangible. It cannot be blown up, or, if sufficiently large, be obstructed. No bridges or culverts are needed to carry it, no railway-stations or signal-boxes can be destroyed. A steamer can carry its freight and protecting armament concentrated together in a small and easily defensible compass: it is self-supporting as regards its defence, and will traverse a broad stream, from which opposition has

once been cleared, without the endless guards and posts that are needed to keep a long line of rail intact. Our recent experiences in South Africa have furnished us here with an illustration which will be fresh in the minds of everyone.

Clearly, the general who is so fortunate as to get control of such a waterway as the Mississippi, and, at the same time, has a predominant navy behind him, can concentrate almost all his force in the fighting-line, can penetrate right into the heart of his opponent's country, and can there seek out and destroy those main hostile forces which the principles of sound strategy show us to be the objective at which a general should aim his principal blow.

In a previous chapter it has been shown that the occupation of an enemy's country, and the capture of his chief towns or capital, are objects which have sometimes been falsely elevated into chief importance; and that they must always remain only of secondary consideration, even though that may not necessarily be to place them at a low value. But whether they are made the primary or secondary objective, towns and localities will, at some period or other of the war, be captured, and then the possession of a navigable river as a means of communication between the various parts of the invading force which occupy them will be invaluable. Not less so will the link with the sea and the communications thence to the ultimate base at home be of value to a country which rests its strength on command of the waves.

In the case we are considering it is scarcely necessary to dwell on an exposition of the strategical advantages with which the control of the Mississippi endowed the Federals. They are obvious to the most cursory inquiry. An advance up the Cumberland and Tennessee rivers would directly threaten the lines of communica-

tion of any Confederate force invading Kentucky. The western portion of Tennessee could not be occupied by the enemy while the Federals were masters of the river that divides the state. A turning movement could be safely conducted along that river, which, if attempted by one of the ordinary operations of war, would be dangerous in the highest degree.

These facts had not been lost sight of when the Federals drew up their plan of campaign in the spring of 1861, and it was determined to fit out a flotilla of special vessels for work on inland waters. Naval officers of distinction, Commander John Rodgers, and after him Flag-officer Foote,* were sent to superintend their building and equipment. They were of two classes—ordinary steamers, converted into ships of war, and vessels newly and specially constructed for the exigencies of service on rivers and inland waters.

Some of the first-class steamers were ready soon enough to take part in the action of Belmont on the Mississippi on 7th November 1861, but it was not until January of the following year that the whole fleet was equipped for service. On the 3rd of January Buell formulated a scheme by which the Confederate centre in the western theatre of war should be attacked by 20,000 men in two gunboat expeditions up the Cumberland and Tennessee.

This plan was never carried out in its entirety; but Fort Henry, on the Tennessee, was captured on the 6th of February by a force of 15,000 men under General Grant, acting in the closest co-operation with a fleet of four ironclads and three wooden gunboats under Flag-officer Foote.

Such a victory had an electrical effect on the spirits of the North. It had been due to the brilliant and irresistible attack of the fleet; and the people of the United

* "The Story of the Civil War," by J. C. Ropes, Vol. i.

States, realising to whom the credit was due, rejoiced in the possession of a weapon which the Confederates seemed unable to resist. That fleets could be a match for forts, was, of course, not true, and subsequent events almost immediately proved the hollowness of any such pretensions.

There was more solid foundation for the recognition of what co-operation between sea and land forces might effect, and the reverse now to be received by the triumphant navy does not weaken our faith in such combined action.

The Confederate general himself never doubted but that Fort Donelson would fall before the ships as Fort Henry had already done.

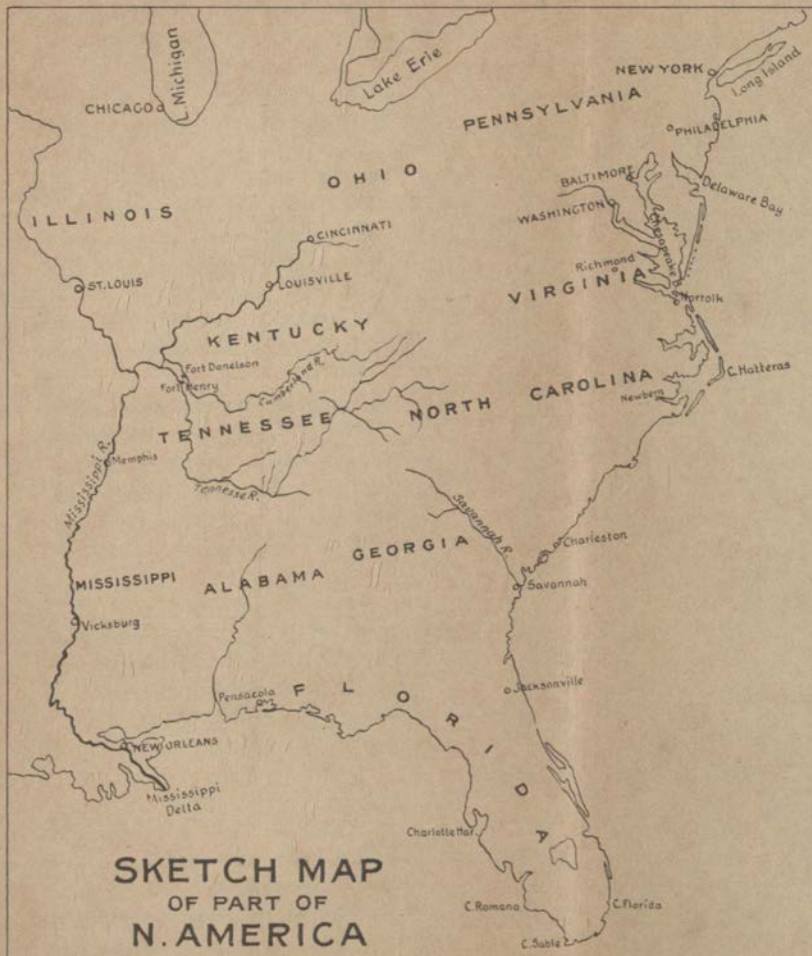
The Cumberland river would then be open to the enemy, and his line of retreat would be compromised.

Grant, however, did not follow up his success on the Tennessee river by an immediate attack on Fort Donelson, for he regarded the co-operation of the fleet as an essential factor in the operations, and the fleet had to repair damages.

We need not follow in detail the operations which ensued. It is enough to say that on the 14th the ships arrived and were at once taken into action. But this time stone walls vindicated their superiority to those of wood: the forts had much the best of the fight, and the fleet was eventually put out of action for the time being. Nevertheless, Port Donelson fell to the army two days later, when 11,500 men with forty guns surrendered unconditionally, and the story of the battle tells us how much store Grant set on the co-operation of the sailors, and, if he could have nothing more, how greatly he desired even a demonstration on their part.*

Again, the most striking event on the Mississippi in 1863 occurred when, on the night of 16th April,

* "The Story of the Civil War," Vol. ii. p. 30.




# SKETCH MAP OF PART OF N. AMERICA

Porter, then in command of the river fleet, ran past the batteries of Vicksburg to the aid of General Grant, who had marched his army down west of the stream. This daring attempt was made with twelve vessels. It proved remarkably successful, and the capture of Vicksburg practically put an end to active operations on the river.*

But we must leave these stirring deeds to glance at less abnormal performances, occasions, that is to say, on which navy and army have worked in combination to make descents on the sea-coasts of the enemy with a view of creating diversions or effecting a change of base during active operations with his armies in the field. Such operations have been numerous in all ages and under all conditions. Rome created a navy in order to strike at Carthage, at first in Sicily, subsequently in Africa itself, and were successful because they retained command of the sea. The French thus struck at us in Ireland at the end of the eighteenth century, and lost any hope of ultimate success they may have had for the opposite reason.

Enterprises in the nature of diversions to draw away the enemy's attention and strength from threatened points are, however, strategical operations in which the nicest political calculation and shrewdness must be exhibited, otherwise they will fail, no matter how perfectly the military arrangements may be carried out. It cannot be said of those undertaken prior to the Crimean epoch that, with the exception of that to the Peninsula, they are of happy augury to us. The expeditions to the Helder in 1799, and to Walcheren, awaken no pleasing memories, although it was in execution, rather than in conception, that the latter failed. The genius of Wellington dragged victory from Spain unaided by the sagacity of our Parliament, and in spite of the politicians, rather than by their aid.

* "The American Navy," by Charles Morris, p. 86.

What we should remember is that the essential condition of success in such diversions is that they should oblige the enemy to employ considerably more forces to meet the diversion than are brought to bear by it. Thus the invasion of the Peninsula by an English army, never exceeding 60,000 men, absorbed and drew away from Central Europe five times as many of Napoleon's troops.

Diversions have often been intended to foster or utilise discontent amongst the subjects of the enemy and gain their assistance. The French Directory were governed by these considerations in sending Hoche to Ireland in 1796, and Humbert, two years later, again counted on an alliance with discontent. In neither expeditions were the expectations as to support from the Irish realised, and it may be said, in general, that he who puts faith in such allies as discontented inhabitants may easily find himself deceived. To grumble is one thing, to give active assistance to the enemies of your country quite another; and in times of stress treason will not run the risk of such drastic punishment as will prove a deterrent to all but fanatics.

Moreover, a man who will betray his country will also betray his ally.

Our own experiences in the expeditions which we launched to Quiberon in 1795, and in that of the following year to the Isle de Dieu, are likewise examples of how enterprises of this nature may miscarry.

It may be noted here that the expeditions under Grant up the Cumberland and Tennessee rivers just described partake of the nature of diversions, because while they were in progress the main Confederate Army under Sidney Johnson was opposed by the main Federal army under Buell.

During the Crimean war, the expedition to Kertch may also be classed as a diversion effected by co-operation between navy and army.

When a change of base has been intended the army and navy have in our history frequently been seen in co-operation. An all-powerful fleet enabled Wellington, in 1813, to quit Portugal and the harbours which there formed his bases of supply and transfer his base to the seaports in the north of Spain. Thus was he enabled to assail the French line of communications and win the great battle of Vittoria.

In 1877, after the Russians had passed the Danube, the sea-power of the Turks enabled them to bring the Montenegrin troops, amongst the best soldiers of the Sultan, by sea to the Gulf of Enos, and thence by rail to Adrianople. By this means 30,000 men were assembled at Tirnova on the 26th of July, and a fine army placed at the disposal of Suleiman Pasha.

The Turkish navy missed so fine an opportunity on the Danube, that this is, however, the only example of their navy considerably aiding the army that can be brought forward.

A century earlier General Howe had been able to embark his army at Staten Island, sail round Cape Charles, and land at the head of Chesapeake Bay, from whence he moved against Philadelphia, and defeated Washington at Brandywine. The example is not quoted as an illustration of sound strategy, but is none the less noteworthy as an exhibition of the mobility with which the navy may endow the army.

M'Clellan's change of base from the Pamunkey to the James furnishes us with another illustration; while Varna and Balaclava were utilised by us with equal facility during the Crimean war because of the same advantages the country possessed of sea-power enjoys.

That France in 1870 had the advantage as against Germany in this respect has often been noted, her failure to turn it to good account been animadverted upon, and reflections as to what might have been

brought forward as illustrations of the value of sea-power and the potency of counter-operations. Before quitting this part of the subject it may, however, be pointed out that a joint naval and military expedition, if it is to affect anything substantial in the nature either of diversion or counter-stroke, must be launched at a moment which is in all respects opportune.

We know that in the realm of tactics the timing of a counter-attack must be so nicely gauged as to appear the gift of inspiration. Intuitive as the stroke of the eagle, it must fall as swiftly and decisively. But where instinct has to be replaced by calculation, the most elaborate preparation to ensure promptness is demanded: the leader must be able to recognise the golden moment, the troops must respond like the members of the body to the volitions of the brain.

In the larger sphere of strategy the same requirements hold good. The weapon here must be ready prepared beforehand also, the time as accurately judged, the directing thought as unerring.

Immediately at the commencement of the war, before the process of concentration is completed, the irruption of a hostile force would seriously disorganise strategical schemes, might create panic, and would certainly interfere with the steady flow of preparation. In our own case such an invasion would amount to no more than a raid until the enemy had gained command of the Channel. In the case of continental Powers the field armies would be weakened by every man placed on board ship. The main issue must always be decided where the main armies meet, and an expedition over-sea could scarcely do more than bring about alarm and inconvenience. In a continental state the armed forces are so vast, and communications are so perfect, that before an army of, say, 50,000 men, which would be a very large force with which to effect a surprise,

could penetrate very far and do much mischief, it would be met by superior forces called out by telegraph from the reserves, and conveyed by rail to cover any important points which might be threatened.

That the main attack should be made over-sea would not, therefore, be probable in the case of Powers on the Continent, and as against us would have to be preceded by decisive naval engagements. The result of such engagements, if unfavourable, would altogether alter the conditions on which combined naval and military expeditions from our shores are based. Were England seriously invaded, every man would be needed on her shores, and we should not weaken our strength at the decisive point by sending away men and ships. Not, that is to say, unless we possessed a vast numerical preponderance, and that, in such a case, we should not be likely to do.

Combined expeditions are not greatly to be recommended, therefore, where the military organisation to be met is efficient, and where a highly-civilised population in the country to be invaded has, in the interests of its convenience and commerce, provided plenty of roads and railways in addition, perhaps, to those which military foresight has constructed. They may, however, be undertaken against a Power whose resources are not fully developed, as was the case when we invaded the Crimea, or the Japanese attacked the Corea, although we shall much more frequently resort to them on a less ambitious scale than either of these.

We will now proceed to consider what factors in them are essential to success.

Two fundamental conditions have already been pointed out.

The chosen moment must be opportune; but not less essential is the command of the sea to the Power which ventures its land forces on the waves.

Napoleon invaded Egypt, and the Japanese the Corea, without having first obtained command of the sea; but disaster followed in the first case, and in the latter the fundamental condition of security had subsequently to be established. The duty of the navy is to guarantee the operation from interruption over-sea, and until it feels that it is in a position to do so, or can count on soon being in such a position, to undertake the expedition would be to accept a greater risk than would be justifiable.

Those who may be at the time the responsible naval advisers of a Government, having been able to give satisfactory assurances on the above heads—that we have the ships ready, and that the road is clear—the next step would be for the heads of the military service to formulate a scheme in conjunction with the naval authorities, which would apply the necessary force at the desired point. In framing such a scheme, the attainment of some definite object must be clearly held in view, and the results which may be expected to follow when it has been gained must also be carefully thought out. "To do something," either to please the electorate, or satisfy Parliament, or demonstrate in the eyes of foreign Powers, is not a national policy, and will lead only to disappointments.

Therefore, at any time when there may be a chance of relations with foreign Powers becoming strained, every move open to us should be considered, every possible theatre of operations examined. The facilities for landing troops that may exist in various places, the internal communications, the climate, the resources of the country, the season of the year—every factor in the problem should be studied and weighed.

This all demands systemised preparation for contingencies such as common prudence will make men adopt in commercial transactions, in agriculture, even

in the organisation of sport. A means for ensuring such preparation is an Imperial necessity and the surest safeguard in Imperial defence. Otherwise, we may fritter away our strength in petty expeditions and half-hearted diversions, set on foot in haphazard fashion, with more hope from good luck than from good guidance. Our history will supply many records of such futilities. Occasions when transports carried our regiments almost aimlessly about the world, forces intended for one hemisphere being suddenly sent to another, expeditions fitted out in haste to carry out operations which were abandoned when the men were ready, and such want of unity and concentration of purpose evidenced in operations, that at length the bitter cry, "God knows what it all means!" went up from our camps and fleets. Our foes wondered too, and Napoleon could write of the Walcheren expedition:

"Before six weeks, of the 15,000 troops which are in the Isle of Walcheren not 1500 will be left, the rest will be in hospital. The expedition has been undertaken under false expectations, and planned in ignorance."

Napier is more scathing than our opponent. Hear him:

"For many years so much ridicule had been attached to the name of an English expedition, that weak-headed men claimed a sort of prescriptive right to censure, without regard to subordination, the conduct of their general."

The want of knowledge, forethought, and system at the seat of government was the cause of the ill-success, the short-sighted criticism, the chatter of superficial strategists that duly made their appearance, swayed counsels now this way and now that, and hampered the execution of any project, while they could form no feasible one of their own.

The question of command is also of the first importance when a combined expedition is being launched. Our rule has generally been to let the naval commander exercise control over the sea, while the general looks after the land forces. The French in the Crimea placed Marshal St Arnaud in supreme command both by land and sea, and, on the other hand, D'Estaing commanded the fleet and the land forces, too, in the West Indies in 1779. We have noted that formerly soldiers such as Prince Rupert and Monck did not hesitate to assume command of ships, but we may take it that the dual system will always prevail with us, and it is probably a good arrangement.

In the first stages of an expedition the responsibility, and therefore the chief voice, must fall to the admiral. When the troops are on shore the general must command and his needs must be ministered to by the navy.

That is to say, that the military authorities, when troops are embarking, bring the men, stores, guns, horses, etc. to the water's edge, and, under the supervision of the navy, place them on board the lighters or boats which are to convey them to the transports, if such conveyance is necessary. Then the navy are responsible for getting them on board. During a disembarkation the process is reversed. The naval authorities either place the transports alongside jetties or provide craft to convey the troops, etc. from the ships to the shore. The task of the soldiers is then to land them. There may be intermediate stages when good sense and good feeling must ensure harmony. It is probably more a matter of men than of methods, and only such men as are likely to act in sympathy with one another should be sent out.

Petty jealousies, prejudices, or self-interest are out of place on active service, and perhaps men are more reasonable now that the army and navy understand

one another better than, it is to be regretted, they have sometimes shown themselves in the past. A good understanding will be most certainly brought about by officers of the two services meeting one another frequently, being in close touch with one another's views, and with the interests which both services must safeguard. Considering how often combined expeditions have figured in our annals in the past, and how often they will, in all probability, be undertaken again in future, it would appear desirable to occasionally make a disembarkation scheme the feature of our manœuvres, to give men practical experience and show what may be demanded from them when harbours and quays are not at their disposal.

A naval commander cannot be expected to risk the safety of his ships, however urgently the situation may call for the troops. He must be left to decide the spot where the landing can best be effected from the naval point of view. The nature of the coast, the weather, the depth of water are all questions for him, but, on the other hand, a covering position will have to be chosen, and there is a host of other matters, with which soldiers are familiar, which cannot be ignored when a disembarkation of troops is contemplated. But all such things can be provided for, and divergent interests may be reconciled where mutual understanding and good feeling prevail. It will not be out of place to note a few of the chief executive arrangements which operations such as we are discussing will demand.

Absolute secrecy, where there is the slightest chance of the disembarkation being opposed, is perhaps of first importance. Not more than two or three men of all those who leave our shores should know whither the ships are bound. Often no one should know until sealed orders are opened.

A sheltered anchorage for the fleet and smooth

water for the boats are other points of salient importance. Great landings on open beaches—such as our landing in the Crimea or in Egypt in 1801—have been effected when time was not a vital consideration. The altered conditions which steam and telegraphs have brought about will usually now necessitate a far more rapid procedure. A wind producing surf may blow for days, and while the expedition — which calculated on three days being enough in which to effect a landing—is tossing for five upon the waves, the chance of surprise, perhaps of success, is blowing away. The general who counts on being able to land on an open beach whenever he chooses is a gambler, even in these days when steam has ousted sails and made him independent of a fair wind.

The landing at Aboukir Bay in 1801 was delayed five days owing to the weather, and we may picture to ourselves how Abercrombie must have chafed and fretted all that time as he watched the enemy's working parties and their entrenchments growing more formidable day by day.

Just the same cause brought about just the same delay, when in 1808 Sir John Moore brought his force to Maceira Bay and disembarked it on an open beach.

Napier tells us that five long days of incessant exertion on the part of the navy were needed to carry through the operation, not even then effected without loss of lives and material. "For the boats were constantly swamped by the surf, and such was its fury that not more than thirty remained fit for service at the conclusion."*

The French expedition to Algiers in 1830 encountered difficulties of the same nature, and in that

* Napier's "Peninsular War," Vol. i. p. 221.

case a delay of no less than twenty days before the disembarkation could be effected was brought about.

How much, on occasions such as are under discussion, we are in the hands of the wind and weather is also exemplified in the story of our landing in the Crimea.

Surf still obstructs an invader and protects the invaded as much as ever it did. The feasibility of the landing cannot be guaranteed from hour to hour. A gale fifty miles away may stop it for days. Without surf the open beach is probably the best of all landing-places where speed is of importance; but, since we cannot control the weather, we can never, when time is a factor in the problem, safely select such a spot.

Neither does the substitution of steam for sails aid us greatly. It gives precision to the movements of the ships, and it enables them to anchor where a sailing-vessel would not have dared to venture. Steamboats may tow rowing-boats to the shore, but they cannot allow their own keels to grate upon the sand or shingle. They are too deep in the water and too heavily weighted. The ultimate landing must still be made by means of oars in the old-fashioned way; and it was the opinion of the late Admiral Colomb that landings on exposed coasts are still just as difficult and dangerous as they used to be.

Again, it may be possible to land infantry where it would be impossible to place guns and horses ashore.

Water and fuel must often be taken ashore, for an open beach is frequently deficient in such necessities. A covering position is also always a necessity, and the troops who land first must be ready to move into it at once. This, again, implies the need for at any-rate a proportion of regimental transport being early disembarked, and this, in turn, imposes restrictions on the landing of infantry.

But the ships may have, often will have, to cover with their fire the landing of the troops. Hence it is desirable to choose a spot which will not shelter the enemy from this fire, and to which the warships can approach sufficiently near to render their projectiles effective.

We are here confronted with a difficulty which a study of the chart alone can settle. The six-fathom line will probably set a limit to the approach of the warships, and the six-fathom line is often so far out on a shelving-beach that the fire from warships could not be reckoned upon to render adequate support.

All of which considerations, only briefly indicated here, point to the necessity for the most careful previous reconnaissance of the locality both by land and sea. There is no combined operation in which the two services so absolutely depend on one another, and with reference to which their requirements, however divergent, must be reconciled before a successful issue is assured.

The number of transports required for a force will vary with the length of the voyage.

A rough rule has been given as follows:—

For long voyages, such as to the Cape, India, or Australia, the net tonnage allowed is $2\frac{1}{2}$ tons per man and 7 tons per horse. For a voyage not exceeding twelve hours, a horse requires $2\frac{1}{2}$ tons and a man $1\frac{1}{2}$ tons. For voyages under a week, 2 tons per man and 6 tons per horse are considered necessary. Guns and waggons have spaces allotted to them according to their construction. These weights include first line of transport, arms, stores, ammunition, and rations and forage for three months in the first case and for one month in the third.

A better notion of the magnitude of the undertaking

will perhaps be given by the following figures,* which are quoted by several text-books as those required in the case of an Army Corps for an expedition over-sea involving a sea voyage of more than a week.

| | Ships | Gross Tonnage |
|---|---|---|
| 1st Division . . . | 19 | 65,455 |
| 2nd „ . . . . | 19 | 61,828 |
| 3rd „ . . . . | 18 | 63,451 |
| Corps troops . . . . | 21 | 69,313 |
| Cavalry (two brigades) . . | 30 | 121,575 |
| Lines of communication . | 27 | 75,490 |
| Total | 134 | 457,112 † |

53,746 Officers and men
20,076 Horses and pack-animals
2,591 Carriages ‡

The task of the navy, when it had to safeguard the flotilla which formerly conveyed a powerful expedition, was a far more difficult one than it will be in modern times. In 1799, 17,000 British troops required 130 transports for their conveyance to Holland. Sir Ralph Abercrombie's expedition to Egypt with some 16,000 men was, according to Colonel Furse's estimate,

* But with the very large force of artillery, by recent regulation allotted to an Army Corps, these figures would be increased.

† "Staff Duties," by Clarke and Rothwell, gives the following information as to calculation of tonnage:—

"Ships are registered as of so many tons gross, the numbers representing the tons corresponding to the total cubic space below deck and of the closed spaces above deck. To arrive at a vessel's freight-carrying capacity all the non-freight-earning spaces, crew room, engine room, coal spaces, etc., are deducted. For these a large deduction—some 40 per cent.—has to be made in practice. So that a ship of 3000 tons gross may have only a freight-carrying power of some 1800 tons.

"In the same way, when calculating the gross register tonnage required for a given body of troops, about 66 per cent. must be added to the estimated net tonnage."

‡ The 19,148 men and 5908 horses sent to Egypt in 1882 were conveyed in forty-seven steamers of gross tonnage amounting to 140,000 tons.

conveyed in between 105-115 transports of various sorts. The French force of 37,331 officers and men and 4008 horses, which made the descent on Algeria in 1830, utilised (according to the same authority), warships, 103; transports, 357; one-masted boats, 124; chalands, 55; flat-bottomed boats, 30—669 vessels.*

The men-of-war held the greater part of the troops, commissioned ships having carried as many as 24,041 of all ranks.

The British portion of the expedition to the Crimea consisted of 120 sail, including ten ships of the line (two of them being screw steamers), four frigates (one of them being a screw steamer), eleven steamers-of-war (paddle and screw), twenty-four steam transports, including three of Her Majesty's service, seven steam tugs, which were a most valuable adjunct, and sixty-four sailing transports.

The British ships-of-war, with two or three exceptions, carried no troops.

The British force to be disembarked consisted of—

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 30,000 infantry | 54 guns | 1,624 horses | for guns |
| 2,192 artillery | | 1,530 „ | cavalry |
| 1,240 cavalry | | 55 „ | staff |
| | | 160 „ | regt. officers |
| 33,432 men | | 3,369 horses. | |

Number of boats employed in landing men 326
„ horse and gun flats 24

Arrangements were made for landing at each trip 6,400 infantry, 12 guns, 216 artillery horses, and all the horses of the staff.

The operation began at 7 A.M. in smooth water, and there being no opposition, by 6 P.M. 30,000 infantry

* Used for transporting animals and landing troops. "Military Expeditions Beyond the Seas," by Colonel Furse, C.B., Vol. ii. p. 132.

and 24 guns, or four complete batteries, had been landed. At nightfall the weather became so bad that the operation had to be suspended.*

The French contingent of 28,000 men and 1430 horses was conveyed in 128 ships, which were for the most part vessels-of-war.

The opportunity for co-operation between army and navy does not by any means come to an end when the troops are disembarked. The needs of an expeditionary force will always demand a harbour to be utilised as its base of supply, and, if the attack is not made in the first instance on the port, which will not often be the case, an operation on land will be the sequel to the landing. This attack on the port from the land side can be much assisted by the navy, either by creating a diversion on the sea side, or by establishing a blockade.

In the vast majority of cases this blockade and the safe-guarding of the sea communications of the army will exhaust the possibilities in co-operation which the ships can avail themselves of. Occasionally, however, the march of the army may be along the shore, and then the fleet can protect one of its flanks, or may even take part with it in a general action.

Thus the march of the Allies to the Alma was covered on the flank next the sea by their warships, and the co-operation of the men-of-war was characteristic of the great battle of the 20th September. In 1801 our ships also bore a share in the battles which were fought near Alexandria, and the co-operation throughout the campaign was most genial. In the first place, the actual disembarkation was covered by the fire of the warships. Five days later our gunboats brought their fire to bear during the battle of Mandora. Subsequently, English

* *Vide* Account by Captain W. R. Mends, R.N., C.B., in the "Journal of the U.S. Institution," Vol. vi. p. 396.

gunboats on the lakes watched our left flank, and by their presence threatened the enemy's right, while our fleet on the other flank prevented reinforcements reaching our opponents. The co-operation of the navy next enabled us to establish a new base at Rosetta.

Again, during the advance to Cairo, gunboats on the river accompanied the march of the army, and after the capture of the capital we find gunboats again most useful in escorting an expeditionary force of 4000 men across Lake Mareotis to invest Alexandria on the west.

Throughout the whole of their course the operations of 1801 are, in fact, a salient example of how the amphibious power of England may be applied. Not the least interesting part of the story is the lesson conveyed to us by the fact that it was the long delay in Marmorice Bay, and the practice in carrying out a disembarkation thus afforded, which made the operations so successful, in spite of the fact that the weather was against us, and that surprise was rendered impossible. A landing on an open beach in the teeth of strong opposition was thus forced upon us, and demanded all the dexterity we had acquired.

Nor must we forget that the navy aided in the defence even of so essentially a military undertaking as the celebrated lines of Torres Vedras. It was not only that several naval officers took part in the defence; that "Black Charles," afterwards distinguished in the Baltic, was with his cousin, the Sir Charles Napier of Scinde; or that a naval officer was in charge of the signal stations in the lines. More substantial assistance was given by the flotilla of gunboats which secured the right flank of our entrenchments at Alhandra. But for the intervention of the Admiralty, the co-operation would have been even more complete, for it was intended to land a large body of seamen to man the last

line of works and thus free troops for active operations.*

Our wars in China in 1840 and 1841 will also furnish illustrations of our sea and land forces combining against a foe on land; but in bringing them and the foregoing instances forward, the instruction to be reaped from our annals is nothing like exhausted.

Before, however, leaving the subject of combined naval and military action, a brief mention of the operations in Egypt in 1882 must be made. Until the recent war the expedition which led to the defeat of Arabi might well be considered the classic of its kind. An interesting comparison between it and that of 1801 can be set on foot, and it may be shown how widely different were the strategical problems set to Wolseley and Abercrombie. I have, indeed, dwelt elsewhere on this part of the subject; but such an inquiry belongs rather to the realm of strategy by land, and would be out of place here, where my object is to discuss only that which interests both naval and military officers.

It will be enough to say here that we find the real plan of these operations rigidly kept secret by the Commander-in-chief, and that condition of success which I have insisted on as essential in the earlier portion of the chapter fully provided for. Secrecy, when combined with resolution and swiftness, the foundation of all great strategical triumphs; secrecy, the silent, unobtrusive, but determining factor in the opening of all decisive campaigns is its special characteristic. Next we have a good organisation of the force for the purpose in hand, and finally a staff knowledgable and competent.

Success followed swiftly.

Because assured by methodical arrangement.

Nor is it unbecoming to point out that if the story

* *Vide* an account in the Journal of the R.U.S.I. by Commander the Honourable H. N. Shore, R.N.

of 1882 exhibits our land and sea forces most happily co-operating, and playing into one another's hands, it shows us also the limitations of naval power, and the potency, or rather the absolute necessity, of an army mobile and efficient, ready to go wherever the political situation may call it, and prepared to intervene when the efforts of the sailors have exhausted themselves. While heavy guns could bombard, it needed a land force to hold Alexandria and the shaken forts. Each service showed its power, and each stepped in at the moment that its peculiar characteristics were in demand.

Nor is that more recent and most curious contest between Japan and China in 1894 to be overlooked. Here we see both belligerents sending expeditions to the same goal, both using water transport, one because being an island it could not reach its goal without it, and the other because the difficulties of marching were greater than those of moving by sea.

The Japanese arrangements were admirable, and a celerity and precision that no Europeans could have surpassed characterised their operations. If the plan, in view of the fact that command of the sea had not been attained, was audacious, it was not rash. For the risks were studied, correctly gauged, and wisely accepted by the Japanese strategists.

The victory of the 15th of September was the outcome of a carefully thought-out and well organised combination. By it the fighting qualities of the modernised Japanese army were placed beyond a doubt. The world was amazed. But while we wondered with the rest we should have imitated. The lesson lies before us plainly enough. A comparatively small island in the Far East emerges, within a few decades, from barbarism to civilisation, from the crudities of savage warfare to the highest military skill. By diligence, by system, by good organisation, a formidable

fighting force that works with the certainty and rapidity of mechanism is produced. Conception and execution are exactly adjusted to the means and purpose. An eye-witness has assured me that it is questionable whether we could have carried out the combined operation as perfectly as did the Japanese. And behind us there sleep some centuries of practice and experience. To my mind the true lesson for us lies, not in the details, but in the broad features of the scheme. Whether done well, or not very well, that it was done at all should give us pause. For it shows that any race or any nation that sets to work to improve its institutions, and administer its resources to the best advantage, will succeed as surely in the realm of war as in other departments of state. War is a matter of business, and the effect of good organisation and professional training will infallibly produce their effect, and secure victory, whether the contest be on the Rhine, or in the Korea.

War and the preparation for war can be studied as methodically as can engineering or shipbuilding, and the results are equally to be foreseen. The railroad or the steamer built with the requisite knowledge, and with a whole-hearted desire to produce the best article for the money, will answer expectations. So, too, will the army, whether British or Japanese.

# CHAPTER VI

## NAVAL BASES AND COALING-STATIONS

IN the previous pages the analogy which may be traced between the circumstances of a great Empire with colonial possessions stretching far away from the mother-country, and those of an army whose advanced forces must be linked with the main base has been pointed out.

The resemblance is more than superficial. It is real and instructive. But the analogy must not be regarded as complete.

A naval base, and the dependence of ships upon it, bears, for example, only a superficial resemblance to the term, as we use it in relation to land forces. Soldiers are accustomed to look to their bases for supplies of all sorts, and only a disaster or bad management is ever expected to interfere with their due delivery. The navy secures the channel of supply so absolutely that the flow proceeds as it would in times of profound peace. Ammunition, rations, even forage, occupy only a comparatively small space, and the quantities piled up on the wharves furnish commanders with resources that are practically unlimited. Food and ammunition form for the navy, however, only a small part of its needs. Coal is what ships will usually most urgently require, and coal is bulky, and is prone to deteriorate in store. So that even one of our greatest bases can only furnish a great fleet with a reserve that, were the needs of an army in question, would be looked upon as trivial. Provisions and ammunition for three months is but a moderate amount for a base on shore

to hold. Yet three months' coal always ready for our biggest fleet is an impossible demand. So that a base abroad can never represent the same thing to a fleet as to an army. In peace time replenishment from home keeps the reservoir full, and the fleet need look no further than its immediate base, but in war time it will be different, and the navy, until it has completely cleared the seas of its opponents, will often have to regard England or some coal-producing region as its true support. When supplies can come to it direct from thence it will often be desirable that they should do so. Thus a fleet in European waters, even though one of our great coaling-stations be nearer to it, may prefer to lean on assistance from home.

Again, in the case of land forces, the conveyance of food and ammunition from the base, and between the various posts, either imposes an amount of labour on the soldier that seriously interferes with his efficiency, or so encumbers the columns with transport that, while individuals may be well fed and unexhausted, the mobility of the force they compose is destroyed. The conceptions of the general are circumscribed by supply. The brain may guide the army, but food regulates the rate of progress. On the waters rations and fighting-power move with equal rapidity; the services of combat and supply are combined, only the pace of the fighting-line governs the schemes of the admiral. At half, or at full speed, on the day of battle, or the day before it, or day after it, in pursuit, or in retreat, life on board ship follows generally its uniform course, the seaman gets rest and food with the accustomed regularity: the screw throbs with the same monotony, the ship steams on.

Moreover, there is no fixed road between any two points. A vessel may leave New York for London, and reach its destination either by steaming round the

North of Scotland, or past the Lizard. From Durban to Colombo your course may run either west of Madagascar, or east of Mauritius, as the fancy moves you. On their way to the Cape, during the late war, some of our transports touched at Madeira, and some at St Helena. While on shore, we are sometimes at fault because there is no road; at sea it is the number of paths that bewilders us.

The prevalence or cessation of particular winds, however, formerly set limits to this freedom of movement, and sailing-vessels had to study the currents of the air as well as those of the sea, while, now that coal has given greater independence, fuel still circumscribes the activity and enterprise of the most modern ship. Coal-endurance would, indeed, directly govern the number and situation of coaling-stations, were it not that many of them were called into existence under conditions quite different from those which obtain amongst us to-day. As it is, however, there does exist a close relationship between coal-endurance and their positions, and it is this relationship that, indeed, enables us to grapple with certain problems of Imperial defence which would otherwise present almost insuperable difficulties. The protection of a world-wide commerce, and the shadowing of hostile ships, were war-vessels really as untrammelled in their choice of a course as the openness of the sea suggests to us, might well prove puzzles for the quickest brain. We should find ourselves contending with the resources of nature as well as those of men. Our foe might be as ubiquitous as the sea itself.

The aid of coal-vessels would not be a source of supply which cruisers that had evaded our fleets could usually count upon, and their own coal capacity could only give them a comparatively short life. But how long will that life be? Opinion amongst those who are not experts will usually be found singularly diver-

gent in the matter, even when ships of the same type are under discussion. It is, indeed, impossible to lay down a fixed standard, because the size, the speed, the purpose for which the vessel is intended, are all factors in the problem, and work out different results. Nevertheless, some general information on the subject can be obtained, and some basis for discussion can be supplied by a reference to the coal capacity which is deemed desirable in the case of the various types of warships.

The excellent "Naval Pocket-Book," founded by Mr Laird Clowes, and edited by Professor Laughton, will supply the information in the case of any particular ship belonging to our own or foreign navies, and will help inquirers greatly. We find, for example, the distance in knots which a given quantity of coal will carry a given ship at a given rate of speed. But the actual speed of ships must vary greatly under different conditions of weather, and according to the cleanliness, or otherwise, of their bottoms. The skill and economy of engineers varies also, and there is an art in utilising fuel for steamships to the best advantage, just as there is in every other profession.

The whole question of coal reserves is, however, a very difficult one. The supply such a fleet as that which we keep in the Mediterranean demands is so enormous that more than a few weeks' fuel for its furnaces could not be stored in any one place; and while in peace time replenishment could be kept up from England, this would not always be an easy matter in war. The close proximity of a supply of coal such as could only be assured by coal-ships, might again sometimes become a necessity. Otherwise, an opponent steaming with full bunkers out of port would be in better fighting trim than the ships that awaited him. Hence it follows that, even if un-

exhausted, our great coaling-stations might not be found sufficiently near at hand, and in such cases coal-ships would have to be sent from home to accompany and feed the fleet with fuel.

It is manifest, therefore, that whether we view the case from the point of view of that "blockading" which has been mentioned in a previous chapter, where it is desirable to relieve ships as seldom as possible, or whether sustained operations such as are foreshadowed by the "Howe" policy are contemplated, or whether we are called upon to send vessels on distant expeditions, or perhaps in pursuit of hostile cruisers, a large capacity for carrying coal, or the presence of a floating supply will often make the difference between success and failure. I suppose coal-ships will accompany fleets, and may sometimes meet cruisers and supply them at sea. That is an operation, however, depending on weather, and, in any case, inconvenient. It would also render a policy, of evasion more difficult to carry out. It must manifestly be an advantage for ships to be independent of predetermined routes, and to be self-contained as far as possible. Even the number of coaling-stations which we enjoy will not completely rid us of our difficulties, because the free conduct of operations, both tactical and strategical, must be much interfered with, delayed, and interrupted by the necessity of going into port. Battleships of the type of the *Formidable* and *Implacable* are constructed, therefore, with a coal capacity giving them the power of steaming 7000 knots at 10 knots. It is, however, with reference to cruisers that the coal-endurance question has most interest for us, because it is the protection of our commerce which forms one of the most difficult problems of Imperial defence.

To chase hostile marauders for thousands of miles

across the seas is the task that will often fall to these vessels. Ships that are intended for commerce destroyers have therefore been built with an exceptionally large coal capacity, and many of them can steam a distance of 10,000 or 12,000 knots at their economical rates of speed without replenishing their bunkers. The very much larger numbers of coaling-stations which we possess would enable the British ship in pursuit to work with a greatly-enhanced confidence and precision; but, on the other hand, to stop and coal must often mean the loss of the rubber. A demand has therefore been formulated amongst naval men * that we should legislate to direct their own tactics against our foes, although they have been adopted both because of the nature of the enterprises they mean to undertake, and the lack of coaling-stations which they have to face. If potential opponents possess cruisers faster and of greater coal capacity than any that sail under our ensign, our coaling-stations will not alone reassure us against the menace. A power of mischief, which we should find it troublesome to deal with, is in the hands of the foreigner. If those we may one day be called upon to pursue can steam for 12,000 knots at a stretch, we also must be able to do so. The conclusion appears obvious, and no more need be said about a technical portion of the subject on which I will not venture to give a decided opinion.

Besides, it is but a side issue, and leaves the broad question unaffected.

For, however great the coal capacity of a ship may be, she will sooner or later be compelled to renew her supply of fuel. Hence the number and distribution of the coaling-stations open to her are a

* *Vide* Gold Medal Prize "Essay," by Lieutenant Ballard, R.N., Journal R.U.S.I., Vol. xliv.

matter for us to study. The most elusive and swift cruiser is yet circumscribed in this respect; and, just as its counterpart, the otter must occasionally emerge from its hidden course to breathe, so must the marauding vessel sometimes seek the shore and coal. At localities, therefore, where we know that our opponents possess refuges and depots, we may waylay and engage them. We find in the existence of such localities a basis on which to work — the known quantity which may help us to solve the equation. Of course, our own ships find their freedom of movement circumscribed in a similar manner, but to a lesser extent, because we have been earlier in the field than others, and are, as regards coaling-stations, more liberally furnished than are they.

The risk of hostile vessels seizing on coal at the ports of weak neutrals still remains to be examined. A sea-power strong enough to fight us at all would very likely feel sufficiently strong to over-ride equity and international law, and coal her ships by force when necessary. But this opens up a wide branch of the question which we cannot here deal with, and involves political considerations which are beyond the scope of these pages.

Ships of war have other needs to be provided for, however, besides coal. The floating army, like that on shore, demands water, rations, clothing, ammunition, and articles of equipment. Ships require periodical refitment, cleaning, and repair. Their guns must be frequently examined, for the lives of our modern ones are but short. A protracted war would necessitate the renewal of some; all would scarcely come out of a great action scathless. Dry docks are indispensable too, and so are depots and workshops. Wide anchorages that will accommodate many vessels, harbours into which they may put for shelter and

rest, are demanded also. Such requirements are felt by every great maritime Power, and, therefore, in addition to coaling-stations, such places as Gibraltar or Halifax or Toulon, and the stores and docks and workshops they contain, form valuable possessions that must be secured in the strongest possible manner.

In this connection, it may be noted that, so far from having too many of such strongholds, we, with our world-wide responsibilities, have still too few. A great Imperial dockyard and arsenal in the South Pacific, which would help local capabilities to be equal to the maintenance of our naval power at the Antipodes, is one of the requirements of Imperial defence which is urgent on us.

The fleets and squadrons of the South Pacific should look to Australia as their grand base. The Commonwealth, with a little help from England, might make provision to render itself independent of the mother-country.

No doubt, before the century is greatly older we shall see such provision made; the matter is here touched upon chiefly to illustrate the evolution of our naval bases, and their place in our scheme of Imperial defence. The distribution of our fleets in their eight stations all over the world makes it desirable that facilities for repair and refitment should exist at local headquarters, and that a decentralised system should supply the requirements of wear and tear. After every action a modern fleet will, in all probability, need to seek a port. What overhauling may be required will be of a very different character to that which was called for when the comparatively small wooden vessels of the last great naval war were placed in dock. Modern machinery and modern armaments have delicate constitutions. It is not only after fleet actions that they need the supervision and

resources of experts. They are the products of an advanced civilisation, and have the weakness as well as the highly-developed powers of all such organisms.

Hitherto the term "coaling-stations" has been used in a general sense; but it is more correct to differentiate between the various forms they may assume, and they have been accordingly divided into classes as follows:—(1) naval bases; (2) supply-ports; (3) defended harbours, although the nomenclature is never closely adhered to.

The strongholds that come under the first category have already been indicated. It is at them that we find the headquarters of the local fleets. Some of the greater ones are also known as "Imperial fortresses," and are represented by such types as Gibraltar and Malta.

Supply-ports furnish the local fleets with stores, ammunition, etc., and their positions are selected by our naval authorities according to our strategic requirements.

Defended harbours, as has been noted in a previous chapter, are kept up largely for the protection of our merchant-shipping. They supply refuges at intervals from which our merchantmen may flit to and fro when in war time they have to steer a perilous course amongst the prowling cruisers of the enemy. They are the stepping-stones over which the food-stuffs and raw material of our working people are borne to these islands.

Amongst these three classes, the spots where the roots of our Empire have worked themselves into the soil, what are known by the general term coaling-stations, may be divided. How the demands of defence grew up round each has been touched upon on previous pages.

But we may note once more how difficult it is to

limit what is undertaken; how the amenities or fancied security of a place may, by attracting a large civilian population to it, complicate our position, and make unexpected and unforeseen demands on our strength. The problem soon loses the simplicity belonging to one of a purely military character. Political and social questions become involved. The soldier finds his hand forced by pressure other than that of a military nature. The sailor, less hampered by shore influences, may misunderstand the soldier's motives and measures, and thus a thorny controversy has before now sprung up around the subject. It is to be hoped, however, that agreement on general principles has now finally emerged from the war of words, and it may be admitted that if too much may sometimes have been done in the way of material protection, the fault has been on the right side. "Too little" and "too late" have most frequently, where preparation for war has been concerned, brought us into trouble.

In order to show how heavy the calls on our land forces are, it will, even at the risk of being tedious, be well now to state our various responsibilities as regards fixed defences in our fleet stations, and what has been done to secure them.

The Channel station is so familiar that we need not discuss it.

The Mediterranean naturally comes next to it on the list. But its very importance, and the space it fills in our minds, renders it possible to dismiss it also in a very few words. Our two greatest naval bases or Imperial fortresses, Malta and Gibraltar, with their dockyards, lie within it. During peace time these shelter and supply our fleets in the arena where the great issues of naval warfare have often been determined. These, too, absorb large garrisons and tremendous armaments, and these have also attracted

much criticism, which it is unnecessary here to discuss. Our Mediterranean bases are the outcome of our necessities. They are a growth, not a sudden creation. They might be differently planned nowadays; but they are there, and it will not now be seriously contended that they are over-strong—not, at anyrate, as regards the numbers of their garrisons.

The permanent garrison of Gibraltar may be put in round numbers at 5000 men. "The Colonial Office list" tells us that there is also a small naval establishment of 250 men, exclusive of the crews of the port guardships, and that steps are being taken to increase this latter.

The garrison of Malta is given in the "Statesman's Year-Book, 1902," as 10,840 men, including 859 men of the Royal Malta Artillery, some 2000 Royal Malta Militia, and 59 Malta Militia Division Royal Engineers.

Egypt, which absorbs 5436 of our troops (including 124 of the Royal Malta Artillery), is not strictly to be included in our discussion, but will always need a garrison of British troops.

The South African station comes next to the Mediterranean, and reaches up to the north of the Cape de Verde islands. The garrison of our possessions here can scarcely yet be said to rest on a permanent basis, and is still * on what may be termed a war footing. Simonstown, where there is a naval dockyard, is our naval headquarters in this locality, and is a defended coaling-station and naval base; while Table Bay, close by, is to be classed amongst our defended harbours.

Other defended coaling-stations on this station are St Helena, which has a garrison of about 700 men, of whom some 500 are Colonials; and Sierra Leone, which is garrisoned by 2100 Colonials and 162 British troops.

* 1902.

Ascension is in a class by itself, being entirely under Admiralty control, and being nothing more than a dockyard, coaling-station, victualling yard, and store depot for our navy, in whose interests alone it exists.

On the eastern coast of South Africa we find another defended coaling-station at Durban—a place which will probably attract more attention in the future. At present a naval volunteer defence corps, numbering about one hundred men, is all it musters for purposes of coast defence.

Between the South African and East Indian stations lie several stepping-stones in our Imperial communications. The first we reach as we progress East is Mauritius, an important defended coaling-station, and, with its dependency, Rodriguez, a valuable link in the chain of our Imperial telegraphs. Port Louis, one of the best harbours in the East, and containing a large depot of naval stores, is defended by two forts named respectively, Adelaide and George. The garrison of this colony is 3583 men, including 2048 Colonial corps.

But numerous small islands cluster round the Mauritius command, and several of them are of much assistance to our warships.

Naval coaling-stations, for example, are found at the Chagos Islands, dependencies of Mauritius, and at the Seychelles, oases of fuel in the desert of the sea.

The latter has, however, an administration of its own, and has been practically separated from Mauritius since 1897.

Ceylon has a garrison of 1778, inclusive of 265 Colonials, and provides for the security of a defended coaling-station at Colombo.

A defended coaling-station and naval dockyard exist at Trincomalee.

Defended harbours are to be found at Madras, Calcutta—where there is a dockyard for our Indian marine—

and Rangoon; while on the western coast of the Indian peninsula we have the headquarters of the naval station, and a dockyard for the Indian marine at Bombay, a defended port of the first strategical importance.

Somewhat off the main trade routes, but valuable as the outlet to the Punjab and North of India, lies the defended harbour of Karachi, a port whose importance in the event of war on our Indian frontier would become enormously enhanced, and which the Persian Gulf question also invests with a special strategical interest.

Farther to the west, again, we find a strongly-defended naval coaling-station in the highway to the east at Aden, and one valuable to our mercantile marine, but practically undefended, at Perim.

Suez and Port Said, still farther west on the same great highway, are to be classed as neutral coaling-stations.

Next to the East Indian comes the China station, with its headquarters and base at Hong-Kong, where there is a dry dock and a vast quantity of accumulated wealth of all descriptions. It is protected by a garrison* of 1962 British troops, and 2463 Colonials.

The Straits Settlements absorb 2719 men, of whom 1215 are Colonials, and a defended coaling-station is found at Singapore; but Labuan, possessing a natural coal-supply, which it is hoped to develop more fully, is practically undefended, its garrison consisting only of a small force of armed constabulary.

At Wei-hai-wei we at first intended to establish a secondary naval base, and fortifications were constructed although never armed. Last spring it was announced in Parliament that the idea of fortifying the place had, however, been abandoned, although† it was intended to keep possession of it as a commercial port. If our

* "Statesman's Year-Book, 1902," p. 108.

† A garrison of 1289 men, of whom 1083 were Colonials, was allowed for it according to the "Statesman's Year-Book for 1902."

commercial interests develop there as much as many expect, it is very possible that they will have to be protected, in which event the guns may, after all, make their appearance, and another illustration of the genesis of armaments from trade so familiar already in our history will be supplied.

South of the China we have the Australian station, —lacking, we must note, an arsenal and adequate naval base, but with a defended port and dockyard at Sydney, where the headquarters of the station are.

There are also defended coaling-stations at Thursday Island, and Albany on King George's Sound. The defence of these is provided for by the Australasian colonies, and they also themselves secure the defended harbours which they possess at Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Newcastle, Brisbane, Townsville, Hobart Town, Dunedin, Lyttleton, Wellington, and Auckland. In the South-East American station we have the Falkland Isles where there is a coaling-station, and there it is intended that the naval base and headquarters of the South-East American station shall be placed.

In the North American and West Indian station the naval base is at the Imperial fortress of Bermuda, with a garrison numbering 3068 men, of whom 1011 are Colonials; while at Halifax, Nova Scotia, we have another naval base of the first importance which is to be classed amongst our Imperial fortresses, and has a garrison of 1783 men.

A defended coaling-station exists at Jamaica, where there is also a dockyard; and this island, when the inter-oceanic canal is completed, will probably become of increased strategical importance. It is to be noted that it lies only about 120 miles from Santiago, an important harbour now in possession of a young, vigorous, and powerful nation.

The present garrison is only 1774 men, of whom 1050 are Colonials.

St Lucia, another of our defended coaling-stations, will also, no doubt, become of considerably greater importance when the canal just referred to has been constructed. We may then find it necessary to increase its garrison, which now numbers 1529 men, of whom 600 are Colonials, and from which the garrison of the neighbouring island of Barbadoes, amounting to 38 officers and 753 men, has to be deducted.

Trinidad supplies a defended coaling-station at Port of Spain, with a garrison of some 1200 Colonial troops, and there is also a defended harbour at Georgetown, British Guiana, where there is a small Colonial garrison.

Finally, in the Pacific station we have a dockyard and naval base at Esquimault with a garrison of only 327 men.

How vast the problem of Imperial defence becomes when the defence of so many outlying ports has to be provided for will be at once apparent. But it cannot be said that we have even yet reached finality here. We shall probably have to add to the garrisons of some stations as new developments in their neighbourhood supervene. South Africa will certainly swallow up a larger portion of our army than was allocated to it before the war. The American Isthmus Canal foreshadows new possibilities in another region, and nowhere are there signs that point to the abandonment of any positions at present occupied by us. That it is a source of weakness to be obliged to subdivide so greatly our forces all must recognise. Soldiers with the lessons of strategy in their minds will be the first to deprecate a condition of things so inimical to all that science inculcates. In a previous chapter something on this part of the subject has been said, and the extreme views which would only assign a garrison of one battalion to

a place like Malta have been combated. But to analyse and discuss schemes of defence for all the places that have been specified would be impossible, and, even if not so, would be improper. The persons responsible for their security draw up such schemes, and, no doubt, make representations which receive attention in the proper quarter. But we may make fairly sure that the forces employed are not unduly large, and that it is not in the least probable that any future re-arrangement will lighten the burden our army has to bear in this respect.

Neither will I attempt to enter on a detailed account of the tactics of coast defence, or of the various adjuncts that are called into play in those operations. Such matters belong to a technical branch of the subject we are dealing with, and do not affect the general principles of a broad survey. But I may be allowed to touch briefly upon the various forms of attack which we shall most probably be called upon to meet, because it is the possible form of attack which moulds the system of defence, and fixes the standard to which our garrisons should be kept up.

First may be mentioned a combined effort by both ships and men to invade and capture the place.

For such an enterprise, while we retain command of the sea, time becomes for our opponents an essential factor towards success. All our bases should be impregnable so far as a mere *coup-de-main* is concerned. Investment is a tedious operation, and will have to be abandoned, unless the fleet which will inevitably come to the rescue can be staved off. Attack and investment on a grand scale, such as the Crimea witnessed, are not dangers which we need greatly fear till our supremacy is challenged and destroyed, at anyrate for a time.

It does not, however, appear impossible that a foe

might find it worth his while to attempt something less. A successful raid against one of our outlying possessions would not be of decisive influence, or of permanent detriment; but might not a hostile fleet inadequately found in stores or coal find its advantage in making a dash at one of our depots, if left open to attack? The fuel it contained might certainly tempt a squadron of cruisers, which had eluded us for the time, to try and rifle the stores of one of our coaling-stations.

Again, an unfortunate disaster might render our ships locally inferior, if only for a time, and they might then be glad to seek secure shelter such as one of our fortified bases can afford. And till the balance of power were redressed from some other region, there might they have to lie covered by the guns of fixed defences.

Recognising to the full that the command of the sea is the bed-rock of our system of defence, such contingencies as these are not surely mere chimeras of the imagination? At the outbreak of a war the exact position and strength of our foes may not be accurately known, and uncertainty of that kind tends to breed a very dangerous anxiety. We remember how puzzled the world was as to where Cervera's squadron would next appear after it left home waters, and we cannot doubt that even in these days of improved communication, panic might again prove an element in the situation not lightly to be faced.

A form of attack which is, however, a more real menace is that from torpedo boats.

The bombardment of coast towns looms large in popular apprehensions, and our complex existence cannot afford to ignore popular feeling, but I feel confident that we shall hear less about this particular form of danger when the experiences of the siege of Ladysmith have been fully assimilated, and the risk to the lives of inhabitants is correctly gauged.

The shells that were thrown into that comparatively small area may be reckoned by the thousand, and a great many of them were of 4.7 (from the four Boer howitzers) and 6-inch calibre. The damage effected was very small, and I do not remember any case of stores or supplies having been injured by fire. Yet the town lay in a saucer under the hills round, and seemed absolutely at the mercy of the guns.

Ships, unless in close proximity to their base, will hardly venture to fire a very large number of shell away, and run the risk of meeting our ships subsequently with their magazines only half full. The heavier guns have a short life, and to fire anything like the number of rounds from them that were discharged by the Boer siege guns would be quite impossible. So that this dread of bombardment is not by any means well grounded. The other forms of attack mentioned, with the exception of that from torpedo boats, are rendered probable or possible, according as the strength of our navy is markedly superior or not.

What may be termed the "set" form of attack—that is to say, the deliberate closing of ships with our forts to quite short range, medium musketry ranges we should term them on shore, would be to run enormous risks. It may conceivably be possible, as some anticipate, that the superior volume of fire brought to bear by the fleet would quickly overpower the defence, that while the ships were rapidly steaming in to short range they would not receive any severe punishment; yet every admiral will hesitate to pit his ships against fixed defences, and will think of what may happen if he subsequently meet the hostile fleets with some of his ships crippled, and magazines and bunkers not refilled. Personally, I cannot imagine that any admiral would think of undertaking such an enterprise.

But a serious danger does exist at places where a

landing might be attempted. And it is with this question of meeting a land attack, that the strength and composition of the garrisons of our bases and supply ports abroad is closely involved.

During a war with a great naval Power, however strenuous an effort may be made to account for and shadow the hostile fleets, combinations and chances may work against us, and occasions will arise when some of our ports may be in no danger at all, while others still lie open to menace. The naval commander-in-chief on a station may feel quite confident in his ability to prevent the attack on certain places, while he is doubtful as to whether he can secure others. Since bases and supply ports, both military and commercial, are held in the interests of the navy, their security becomes a question, which can, undoubtedly, be most appropriately dealt with by the naval authorities.

That a garrison, at one time necessary, might, at another, be wasted ; that one place might, under certain circumstances, be too strong, and yet, under others, not strong enough, is easily understood. The strength or presence of the ships being the determining factors, and the interests of the navy being principally concerned, it would manifestly be convenient to have ships and garrisons under the same control, and that the latter should be transferable from one part to another, according as the naval strategic situation demanded. Hence has arisen the demand that the garrisons of many of our coaling-stations should be taken over by the admiralty, and should be placed under naval, rather than army authority.

But we may want to go a step further, and, in place of securing ourselves against a local attack, deliver one. When an enemy's squadron has been driven into port, an element of uncertainty will still remain, because, unless the blockade on the ships can be made very

rigid indeed, they may escape. Especially, if time presses, it may be better to try and destroy the hostile ships than to watch them. Moreover, to deprive an enemy of his local base and supplies, once for all, is the most drastic and effectual method of dealing with him.

To land parties on shore in order to render the positions of ships in a harbour untenable, is, therefore, a most effective, and perfectly legitimate naval enterprise. It was thus that the Chinese ships in Wei-hai-wei were attacked by the Japanese during the late war; and such a form of attack, especially when combined with torpedo boats, as was the case at Wei-hai-wei, is likely to be more deadly than the old-fashioned expedient of "cutting out."

The chief obstacle to the success would be the difficulty that an admiral would experience at out-of-the-way parts of the world in laying his hand on what we may term a mobile force, to carry out an enterprise of the description we have in view.

It has been suggested that if distant naval bases were garrisoned by marines, such a force would be always at hand, and that the self-governing colonies should furnish us with a Colonial naval reserve to take the place of the troops moved away from the fixed defences to carry out some such scheme as has been indicated.

It has lately been stated that an increase of 5000 marines would give us a force, with a relief for it, large enough to look after Hong-Kong and Wei-hai-wei, and that the new system might be given a trial in these colonies. However good the idea underlying the plan may be in itself, exception may be taken to it, with reference to Hong-Kong, on the ground that the 2500 men which, according to it, are considered a sufficient white garrison, cannot be regarded as an adequate protection for a place so valuable, and by no means beyond the menace of attack from the land. At present

the Imperial troops, including the Hong-Kong regiment, mount up to about that number of men, but it may be questioned whether the place is as secure as it ought to be. A garrison which had only the same dimensions, and which might, and probably would, be taken away to sea in time of war, to be replaced by a reserve force without the same intimate knowledge of the defences, and less highly trained, would not by any means inspire confidence. Wei-hai-wei, we have learnt by recent announcements in Parliament, is not to be turned into a naval base of as great importance as was at one time expected, and arrangements might suffice there, that would not satisfy all demands farther west.

The truth is, that not only is Hong-Kong of such supreme importance that it might well attract a carefully organised attack, but that there we must be prepared to meet, not only a descent on the south, but enterprises directed against it from the mainland.

The case of Hong-Kong is quoted here, not because it is suggested that anything in the way of exception can be taken to the plans for its defence, but because it well illustrates the increased demands which the growth of the instinct of colonisation amongst continental Powers has thrown upon our military resources. The occupation of an island in the Far East has brought us into touch with more than uncivilised races, with Western progress as well as Oriental decay. It may even be said that the Kowloon annexation has given us a frontier co-terminous with that of China, and through her, with the settlements of European Powers. The Power which holds the hills on the mainland commanding the harbour, dockyards, etc., has Hong-Kong at its mercy, and to defend our land frontier as well as the coast demands, not only a garrison in considerable force, but a mobile body trained for operations which only a very efficient field army could undertake.

Lantao and Hong-Kong itself absorb considerable garrisons in their defences, but the danger of an advance from Canton necessitates in addition the upkeep of a field force to guard against it, or even to make a counterstroke by which Canton might be taken into our hands. Such a seizure of Canton would best be effected by a combined naval and military expedition, but, if such an expedition were crowned with success, the necessity for leaving a strong garrison in the captured territory would still remain. It is not to be considered probable that we should ever find ourselves at war with China alone; it is more likely that foreign backing would precipitate, as it would originate, hostility on her part. We ought, therefore, to be prepared to meet a Chinese army plus something behind it, giving it cohesion, direction, and enterprise generally, of a character such as Western and not Eastern civilisation produces.

To select Hong-Kong as a suitable place for experiments in matters of defence does not seem, therefore, altogether a happy suggestion, and if any change in the garrison is to be made it should rather take the form of an increase which would provide a mobile force held ready on the mainland to parry an attack or make a swift and decisive counterstroke.

It is sometimes the fashion in speaking of Imperial defence for writers to assume that the defence of our Colonies and coaling-stations, except in the case of India and Canada, is a matter chiefly for the navy. Some authorities, indeed, seem to consider an all-powerful navy as all that we need look to for their security.

But a consideration of the altered conditions in the far East, exemplified as they are in the case of Hong-Kong especially, brings home to us the fact that we have land frontiers in more places than Canada and

India, and that where a land frontier exists a field force is necessary for its defence, because we can be attacked by land as well as sea.

We could no more let Hong-Kong go than we could throw Liverpool to the wolves. We might not impossibly have to fight for Hong-Kong on shore as we have had to fight on land, and were only the other day still fighting, for Durban and Simonstown. Four years ago the latter contingency seemed as remote as the former does to-day. The defence of Hong-Kong, in the event of a great conflagration in China, not, again, the dream of a feverish imagination, might, not perhaps in the immediate future but still very possibly, be no more a naval question than were the operations about Estcourt or Colesberg during the earlier portions of the Boer war. We could not defend it at all without a navy, but no more could we do so without an army fighting on shore. It is well to point this out at a moment when, hard pressed as we are to find men for the army, an effort to shift the responsibility for the defence of places at present guaranteed by the army may very possibly be made. When the demands made on our army are daily multiplying, and the supply of men to meet them becomes more difficult to find, opportunism will gladly avail itself of any shelter that may temporarily turn attention from prospects where arduous duties await us, and where responsibilities cannot be put away.

Esquimault is another place where our interests will in all probability increase, and which lies open to assault on the land side. The interests which we safeguard there are, however, not to be compared with those that are to be found at Hong-Kong, and the danger of attack is infinitesimally less, so small that it may now be disregarded. But to our navy

Esquimault may one day be of the highest possible value, and its security against land attack might become a matter of first importance. Again, we have an illustration of how the growth of an Imperial spirit all over the globe has altered the problems with which we have to deal. An American standing army, five or six times at least as strong as it was less than ten years ago, trained and organised after European ideas, is an entirely new factor in the question, and appreciably, although still distantly, affects the situation in the Northern Pacific.

Nor is the state of things, even where the element of a contiguous and potentially hostile foreign territory may be absent, everywhere quite satisfactory.

Labuan is a spot of which little is heard at home, but which may in the event of war draw much attention upon itself. It is of importance because it possesses a coal-field which produces 4000 tons of coal per annum, and, while it would supply our ships, should be denied to the enemy. Its garrison is at present merely a police force of small dimensions, yet it lies close to the part of the world where a great drama has in all probability yet to be played, where all the great Powers have considerable interests and means of protection and aggression, where from every continent armed forces during recent years have been gathered together.

Sierra Leone presents a difficulty because of its unhealthy climate, and to send an adequate regular garrison there would be to sacrifice the lives and health of a large percentage of men. Sir C. Dilke has pointed out that, as things stand at present, the neighbourhood of Dakar constitutes a perpetual menace. And in Senegal there is a large white garrison of more than 2000 men, as well as a black one about equal in numbers. Situated half between Gibraltar and the

Cape, with the best harbour on the West Coast, the place has most certainly a high strategical value, and there can be no doubt that if we gave it up to-morrow another Power would at once occupy it. If for no other reason than this, it has importance for us. A hostile base on the flank of our path round the Cape to India, on the track too of our Eastern trade, might well prove a most troublesome thorn in our side, and an increased garrison of black soldiers, since white men cannot stand the climate, seems another of our present necessities. The hands of our navy will be so full when war first breaks out that to send reinforcements then will be difficult, perhaps impossible. But with many calls upon us all over the world, even to find men will not be a very simple matter.

Again, we are reminded how vastly the problem of Imperial defence has expanded since Englishmen might be found the lonely tenants of whole continents. Where formerly we were pioneers we must now share with others, and must preserve our status as members of a community full of rival claims, rival interests, and rival armaments. The considerations which call upon us to make secure what we have got, belong not to the instinct of annexation or aggression, but to self-preservation. It is no longer a matter of choice with us, but of necessity. Herein lies the explanation of what is termed militarism, misunderstood by many, reprobated by some; and herein is to be found the motive force that impels us to continued efforts, and denies to us the luxury of merely enjoying what we have gained.

It is because of all these responsibilities that our army has grown as it has done; and they are quoted by me here to show how little likelihood there is that it can ever be reduced. Even while we ponder on the difficulties we have to meet already, new

questionings force themselves upon us. Have we, even yet, enough naval bases? Is every fleet station furnished with its depot where its ships may seek shelter and refitment? Few, I believe, will answer these questions in the affirmative. It is, in fact, practically admitted that at present we stand in need of two more, and before very long considerable movements will have to be undertaken as regards yet a third.

Of the new bases which are now called for, one is actually in process of construction in the Falkland Isles, and when it is completed, not only will it be of much assistance to our warships, but our merchant vessels trading round Cape Horn will benefit from it too. The other new base which is demanded is that in the South Pacific, to which allusion has previously been made. A high authority has lately warned us that, in the East also, we should lose no time in perfecting our arrangements.

In India, the situation, according to the late Sir Andrew Clarke, R.E.,* is not, indeed, by any means satisfactory. From Bombay to Calcutta, on a coast line 2000 miles in extent, there is not a single port where a vessel can run alongside a wharf to deliver its cargo. A harbour should be constructed at Madras, not only to facilitate the landing of heavy war material, which is sometimes impossible at present, but in the interests of the commerce of India. The coast of Malabar, according to the same authority, has not a single harbour which would provide sanctuary against a hostile cruiser, and that of Coromandel is equally ill provided. Nature has not in these regions given us what we need, and the construction of several artificial harbours would involve an expenditure from which Indian statesmen recoil. It has been estimated,

* "Nineteenth Century and After," January 1902.

for example, that to provide a harbour of refuge for Madras would involve an expenditure of 2½ millions; but if, as has been asserted, harbours of refuge are vitally essential to the security of the commerce of India, the expenditure of such a sum for a place of so great importance as Madras cannot be regarded as an extravagance.

It was said that False Point, south-west of Calcutta, could easily be converted into such a harbour, while Port Blair in the Andamans might be made a coal depot to supplement Trincomalee.

It must be pointed out, however, that while such places would no doubt be of convenience and assistance, the question of expense in money is not the only one that should be taken into account when we consider the advisability of establishing them. Economy in men is even more essential than in money, and concentration of force is a strategical principle which we must always keep in view.

Enough has been already said by me to show that every defensive work erected entails greater responsibilities than are involved by the number of men told off to work the guns and man the entrenchments. The "little more" ends frequently in the "how much it is." We have always to be on our guard against being drawn further than we originally intended; and it is not expense (although that is a big factor in the problem too) so much as the frittering away of our forces in small detachments that should give us pause when we discuss the creation of new bases and more coaling-stations, or the acquisition of fresh strategic points. Moreover, we must bear in mind that when the requirements of Imperial defence as regards India are under discussion, demands even more pressing than the provision of harbours suggest themselves. Arsenals and dockyards in India should

not only supply local needs of both army and navy, but should satisfy all the requirements of the coaling-stations in the neighbourhood. Decentralisation is certainly a policy which in war has been proved over and over again to be the only sound one. India and Australia are the natural foster-mothers of our forces, both naval and military, in the East, and it is to them and not to England, thousands of miles away, that they should look for armament and supply.

It is more necessary to accentuate this point just at present, because the centre of gravity of the Eastern question is moving from West to East. The focus of the cyclone, should it ever burst upon us, will very likely be in the Yellow Sea, not in the Mediterranean. The nations will gather to battle in the Far East. It is there that the theatre of war must be prepared; it is there that the decisive issues will be fought out. Hence the growing importance of Hong-Kong, the need that India and Australasia should be self-supporting and independent of a long line of communications. The answer to Port Arthur was not to be found in Wei-hai-wei, which has been appraised now at its true worth; the proper reply to it is the creation of a great base in Australia. The future lies in the hands of the young Commonwealth, the infant cradled in the waves of the Southern Pacific, which is scarcely yet dreaming of the mighty power it may one day wield.

An Imperial army is already in men's minds. It may come; but it will come after an Imperial navy, because the foundation and corner-stone of Imperial defence rests deep under the waves. It is from the sea that the great edifice will spring, growing like the legendary palaces from out the deep, "opening on the foam of perilous seas."

And an Imperial fleet demands Imperial arsenals

and dockyards; numerous bases for the ships, whose anchors grapple the bottoms of every sea, whose services are universal. Before the army is created, the means of equipping it locally must be set on foot; the port and dockyards for the ships that are to confer mobility and ubiquity upon it must be planned. Magazines and supply-depots are the first care of the prudent commander, and the machinery of equipment and supply is set in motion before the marching columns throng the roads.

But it is not only in the Far East that the strategical situation is fast altering. In the West a momentous change in the great routes of the world is about to be made. When the Isthmian Canal is cut, the highway of the world's trade will run East and West through the Caribbean Sea. The same cause, which from immemorial times has given its importance to the Mediterranean, will operate at the opposite side of the globe, and we, or our posterity, shall see the West Indian Islands in the very centre of the vortex. The great issues that sealed the fate of nations were in the old times decided in the eastern Mediterranean. Actium and Lepanto and the Nile were fought and won on what is practically the same arena, the same cause bringing about the same catastrophes in the same regions, yet at epochs widely separated. It will not matter when war comes who has fortified the new canal, or who may levy the tolls there, or in whose hands its possession is supposed to rest. The batteries that may protect the passage will not give a ship security that steams beyond their range. The country which commands the seas will dominate the outlets to the ocean, and that power which can keep a squadron superior to those of others in the neighbourhood will control the passage of the waterway as surely as the superior fleet will dominate the

mouth of a harbour. To enable such a fleet to keep the seas in strength a base must be provided in its immediate vicinity; and such a base, having regard to the neighbourhood of other foreign bases from which attacks might swiftly issue, will have to be prepared to defy serious assault.

It is probable, then, that the next few years will see St Lucia invested with a new importance, and a squadron in the Caribbean Sea equal to the protection of our vast commercial interests in the new trade route of the world.

Thus grow the responsibilities of empire, and from east and west our destiny beckons us to wider efforts and more sustained exertions. When others are climbing on either side, to stand still is to be left behind, eventually to disappear. If the path be difficult, energy and exertion are as necessary to a nation's as to an individual's health. And for us the path to empire is the path of progress and the path of duty.

The burthen is one which, once accepted, we can never throw aside. When we attempt to do so we shall be pulled down by its inertia, while if we brace ourselves to the task, and keep our strength in full vigour, we shall stride along and grow stronger, just because we bear it on our backs.

## List of British and Foreign Naval Bases and Defended Harbours, exclusive of European Waters

### British

*Imperial Fortresses and Naval Dockyards*

| | |
|---|---|
| Halifax | Gibraltar |
| Bermuda | Malta |

*Naval Bases and Naval Dockyards*

Simonstown
Trincomalee
Bombay
Hong-Kong
Sydney
Esquimault
Ascension

*Other Defended Coaling-Stations and Harbours*

Sierra Leone
Table Bay
St Helena
Durban
Port Louis (Mauritius)
Colombo
Madras
Calcutta
Rangoon
Karachi
Aden
Singapore
Labuan
Wei-hai-wei
Thursday Island
Perth
Albany, on King George's Sound
Adelaide
Melbourne
Newcastle
Brisbane
Townsville
Hobart Town
Dunedin
Lyttleton (the Port of Christchurch)
Wellington
Auckland
Falkland Isles
Jamaica
St Lucia
Port of Spain (Trinidad)
Georgetown (British Guiana)

*Defended Coaling-Stations of other European Powers*

FRENCH

Martinique
Diego Suarez
Dakar
Obok (Gulf of Aden)
Saigon
New Caledonia

RUSSIAN

Vladivostock
Port Arthur

GERMANY

Kiao Chau (in process of fortification)

Map I

ASIA
CHINA
JAPAN
PACIFIC OCEAN
NORTH AMERICA
ATLANTIC OCEAN
SOUTH AMERICA
AUSTRALIA
BRITISH ISLES
EUROPE
ASIA
SAHARA
AFRICA
PERSIA
SKETCH MAP
SHOWING OUR
NAVAL BASES, COALING STATIONS
AND
DEFENDED HARBOURS.
Those of Foreign Powers exclusive of European & Home Waters are also shown.
British Imperial Fortresses are shown thus
Defended Harbours & Coaling Stations
Naval Bases & Dockyards
Defended Coaling Stations of Foreign Powers
Beyond European & Home Waters.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE GREAT CABLE COMMUNICATIONS OF THE EMPIRE

To an ocean state submarine cables are as valuable in time of war as are signalling arrangements and field telegraphs to an army on land, or telephones and messengers to a Minister in his office. Good intelligence in war is the first requisite of successful strategy, and without a means of communicating information and intelligence, the labour of collecting them is in vain. This is true of any state which has over-sea possessions, but it is of special application to us, because we have so many interests, so many Colonies, so much to protect and so comparatively little to do it with, that we can only hope for success when we call in secrecy and swiftness to our aid, make mobility redress the difficulties space imposes on us, and base our strategy on vigour and decision.

Now we know that what appears intuition in war is often but a manifestation of knowledge. Decision is quick when it is based on the certain information which trustworthy intelligence gives. In Imperial strategy we are brought back to exactly the same principles that govern success or failure in more limited undertakings. To concentrate the forces of a scattered Empire accurate and early intelligence is essential. As in some other problems connected with Imperial defence, what is merely convenient and desirable to other nations is a matter of urgent necessity to ourselves.

Before 1851, when the first cable was laid from Dover to Calais, there were no submarine cables. The few

individuals who risked their capital in laying that first one were animated, it is hardly necessary to say, by commercial, not by patriotic or strategical considerations. It is well to mention this fact, which is conspicuous in the history of our cable laying, because it is a characteristic feature of the growth of our Empire, and is exhibited in our great lines of telegraphic communication as it is in the history of our Colonial expansion and in the grouping of our lines of communication all over the world. The network of cables that traverses the bottom of the seas and oceans reflects our trading enterprise and the size of our mercantile marine. The cables will be indispensable in war, but they were called into being by the arts of peace.

The vigour of our private enterprise is further evidenced when we examine the cable systems of the Empire and the mileage they control.

There are 1750 cables in the world, stretching a distance of 193,232 nautical miles. Of these, 1380 are Government lines, and traverse 21,542.150 nautical miles, while there are only 370 private cables, but the total length of these is 171,690.661 nautical miles.*

Now, the private firms of Great Britain, reflecting in her cables the greatness and enterprise of her commerce, own no less than 114,000 of these miles of private cables.

The greater portion of Government cables are short connections between our shores and those of the continent of Europe, or what may be termed small branches in our great Colonies, or in India.

The great cable arteries from England southwards through the Straits of Gibraltar are naturally those most likely to be of strategic importance to us, but, as

* These figures are taken from "Nomenclature des Cables, etc. dressée d'apres les documents officiels" par le bureau international des administrations telegraphiques. 8 edition, juin 1901. Berne, 1901.

alternative routes, those numerous short lines that join us with countries such as Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, on the continent of Europe, are valuable also. If our cables to Gibraltar and the Mediterranean should fail us, we could still get information through the Continent or even round by the United States.

Of the fourteen cables that connect Europe with North America and Canada, eleven—one of which is laid *viâ* the Azores—take their departure from these islands.

Of the three cables that cross the South Atlantic, all of which touch the shore at Pernambuco, none are owned by foreigners, although one is laid *via* St Louis, Senegambia, and two touch at St Vincent. A Spanish line connects St Louis with Europe, and is the weak point in this route.

It will be noticed from the chart attached to this chapter that an all-British cable connects Jamaica through Turk's Head Island and Bermuda with Halifax, Nova Scotia, and that our West Indian colonies are connected with it.

From England to Gibraltar there are four cables, only one of which proceeds direct, while three join that fortress with Malta and Alexandria. All of these cables are owned by British companies.

The Red Sea is traversed by four cables, all of which are in the hands of British companies. At Aden one of these turns south to Zanzibar, the other three go straight to Bombay.

Two British cables run from Madras to Penang and Singapore; thence the system radiates to the Far East and to Australia.

A double cable from Sydney to Nelson joins Australia with New Zealand.

South Africa is connected with home by various cables owned by British companies on either side of her

coasts. From Aden an eastern cable touches at Zanzibar, Mozambique, Lorenzo Marques, and Durban, and another cable runs from Zanzibar to the Seychelles, Mauritius, and Durban. On this side, therefore, communication passes through foreign soil. On the western side it is the same. Two cables are laid: one follows the coast-line of Africa and touches at St Vincent, Madeira, and Lisbon; the other runs direct from Land's End to Madeira, and thence by St Vincent, Ascension, and St Helena to Capetown.

From Durban a newly-laid cable runs to Mauritius, the Cocos, Perth, and Adelaide, and another newly-laid cable connects Jask, in the Gulf of Oman, with Muscat.

A consideration of these lines of cable shows that, if they have not been laid with any strategic intentions, they at least favour us greatly, because the cable communications of the world are, for the most part, in our hands, and we could interfere, if necessary, more with foreign Powers than they could with us. On the other hand, we have infinitely larger interests at stake than any other nation, and to watch the enemy's movements, to follow up and shadow any detachment of his ships that may escape us, is a necessity more imperative on us than on others. If the telegraph in naval war as in that on the shore is to enable us to bring about strategic combinations and forestall the enemy at vital points, it must be secure against interference. It should not only be safe from destruction but from the risk of our intentions becoming known through the carelessness or dishonesty of the servants of neutral states.

All the three cables across the South Atlantic touch Portuguese or Spanish soil, and one of these comes *viâ* St Louis in Senegambia. The cables to Gibraltar touch at Lisbon. The west coast of Africa is only linked to us through several foreign stations.

There is, in fact, at present no cable, except the new

Pacific one, communicating directly between Great Britain and any point south of Madeira. Our telegraphic communications with the East pass through Egypt or through Russian territory, Asia Minor, Kurdistan, and Persia, a route which might well be open to interference in certain eventualities.

While it is admitted that the interruption of cable communications would be such a measure as in the interests of neutrals a Power at war with us would hesitate to embark upon, still, the issues involved being in our case so momentous, there is ground for anxiety where telegraphic communication is as precarious as it is at present.

From this cause of late years there has arisen a demand for all-British cables—that is to say, for cables which do not touch any soil that is not part of the British Empire. It is urged that we should have no shore ends on foreign territory, that our messages should pass through no hands but those of compatriots, that our own interests alone should govern the management of the line.

From what has been said already the importance of the information which in time of war would converge on our admiralty will be appreciated, and the value, too, of secrecy being preserved as to the orders and instructions which would radiate from thence.

A feeling of insecurity and dissatisfaction with existing arrangements was manifested as long ago as 1887, when the Colonial Conference in London took place. The project, which has now emerged into tangible shape, was again discussed at Ottawa in 1894, and was finally approved of in 1897, when another special conference on the subject was held.

The work was placed in the hands of the Cable Construction and Maintenance Company, and an Imperial, or all-British cable, was at length in process of con-

struction. At the moment of writing, 1902, the final stages have been reached, and the great undertaking is on the eve of accomplishment.*

The estimated cost was £1,866,000, and the total length, including slack, will be 7960 miles. The route might have been shortened, and the expense have been likewise diminished, had the cable been taken across the Pacific *via* Hawaii, but, as this would have destroyed its all-British character, the longer route by Fanning Island was preferred.

The sections of this cable run as follows:—from Vancouver to Fanning Island, 3561 miles; from Fanning Island to Fiji, 2093 miles; from Fiji to Norfolk Island, 961 miles; from Norfolk Island to New Zealand, 537 miles; from Norfolk Island to Australia, 834 miles.

The all-British Pacific cable will be the property of the Government of the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, and the Commonwealth, and will be managed by a board composed of their representatives.

It is not improbable that this great cable will be the forerunner of several smaller ones, which will bring India and the Far East into communication with the Commonwealth and New Zealand, and, *viâ* these dependencies, with England. A new cable, which will certainly be a valuable link, has, indeed, just been finished by the Eastern Telegraph Company, which connects South Africa with Mauritius, Rodriguez, Cocos Island, and Perth, Western Australia.

The Inter-departmental Committee, which has just issued its report on our cable communications, has recommended the construction of a cable "connecting either Rodriguez and Ceylon, Cocos-(Keeling) and Ceylon, or Cocos-(Keeling) and Singapore.†

* The last link of the cable was completed at Sura, Figi, on the 31st October.

† *Vide* "Report of the Inter-departmental Committee on Cable Communications," issued as a Blue-Book, 1902.

An all-British cable to St Lucia is also recommended for construction as soon as the state of cable enterprise in the West Indies permits. In view of the construction of the inter-oceanic canal, the change in the strategic situation in the Caribbean Sea which will consequently be brought about, and the enhanced importance of St Lucia, such a cable will no doubt in the future become an Imperial demand of the first magnitude.

This all-British Pacific cable is, however, the only great submarine cable which, up to the present time, has owed its existence to the action of our Government and not to private enterprise. It is eminently characteristic, therefore, of the development of our Empire, and especially so because, although it owns official parentage, it was created, if not principally, at anyrate to a considerable extent, with commercial interests in view.

For many persons have contended that there exist mischievous monopolies; not a few have feared the formation of "trusts," or "pools," or "combines"—call them what you will—which would exact heavy tributes from men of business. A reduction in the rate of cablegrams to Australia and India is vehemently called for, what has been done not being regarded as sufficient. It has ever been our custom to leave to private enterprise matters that in other countries are dealt with by Government. The burthen of empire weighs on us already so heavily that there is possibly a desire not to add to it. So, questions that will some day have to be touched remain as long as possible avoided, and the "can't you let it alone" of Lord Melbourne becomes a seductive counsel against which it is difficult to keep the ears closed. Even this new submarine cable, which is to touch nowhere save on British soil, might never have been undertaken

by the Government at all had a slight change in the route officially selected been agreed to. A private company would very likely have been prepared to work and maintain it, for a specified annual sum, if it had been taken to Hawaii in place of Fanning Island. But Hawaii is foreign soil, and, as the object of the scheme was to keep the new cable on ours alone, to come to any arrangement was impossible. Some authorities will maintain that the injury inflicted on a great private company brings with it disadvantages to the state not compensated for in other directions. With such a question we have here no concern. By us the all-British cable is regarded as an Imperial necessity, and the possible injury it may inflict on the interests of a commercial undertaking whose shareholders prosper at the expense of the public are not to be considered in the face of the larger interests involved.

Nor is this desire for a cable controlled by one set of interests only confined to this country alone. In July 1901 a telegraph convention was signed between Germany and Holland, which furnishes those Powers with authority to establish a new telegraphic communication between them and their Asiatic possessions. The two Powers are to have joint control of the cables, which are to be independent of any British company. A German-Dutch Cable Company is to be formed, therefore, probably at Cologne. A correspondent of the *Times* in April last gave a detailed account of this new cable, and mentions amongst other things the existence of a secret protocol, which is thought to deal with the dangers arising out of a state of war at some future date. But the treaty itself does not seem to contemplate a state of war; it merely enables the two Powers to safeguard cable communications with their colonies

in times of peace. How the same independence could be maintained in war is another question, and will be referred to again; but it is believed that the Continental Powers do not expect that England in the event of war would respect the neutrality of her opponents' submarine cables, and this idea very probably has a bearing on the subject.

In the present condition of things the neutrality of cables, most desirable from the commercial point of view, would not be in our interests as belligerents, and we have always claimed that we must be free to act as the military situation demands.

As the greatest commercial country we must not overlook, however, that there are substantial advantages for us in the use of neutral lines, and that there is at anyrate a great deal to be said in their favour.

First of all, if the whole of a cable is entirely in our hands there can be no possible hesitation on the part of the enemy to destroy it. To do so will at once become a legitimate enterprise, and as the cable, if not most vulnerable, is most easily grappled in the shallow water near the shore, the places where it emerges from the sea will have to be strongly guarded. A fresh burthen, therefore, on our Imperial resources is created when such a cable is laid.

The question as to whether a belligerent has, by international law, a right to destroy a neutral cable because it is of use to his opponent does not seem to be definitely decided by the authorities on the subject, but within three miles of the shore of the belligerent the opponent might undoubtedly take what steps he pleased.*

* The *Times*, in a leading article of the 28th June dealing with this part of the subject, remarks:

"According to the Naval War Code of the United States, a cable entering a neutral territory may not be touched; it is safe except when it is outside the three miles' limit, or in the belligerent's territorial waters.

If this view as to the limit of an opponent's interference be correct, we should only need to defend the ends of cables within our own waters and at places where many lines converge, such as Valentia and the Land's End, it would be sufficiently easy to do this. But international law is capable of being construed very variously, and is a very uncertain ally. A Power or combination strong enough to keep up a prolonged contest with us would probably be strong enough also to disregard it, if convenient to do so. Who are the guardians of international law? and, when found, *quis custodiet custodes?*

There is, moreover, an objection to interfering with the natural evolution of cable routes as well as of other developments of a great commercial empire, and the routes most convenient to our business people are the best to follow if possible.

In commerce, hours are often of as great importance as they are sometimes in war. A slightly shorter connection, or one where the great depth of water does not check the speed of transmission, where rivalry in business matters runs high, may, by bringing one certain factor, the element of rapidity, into the transaction, turn the scale. The man who can gain the earliest information, and enforce his decision first when a financial crisis is in full flood, wins the rubber. Industrial war is, in fact, waged by telegraph, and industrial war is the concomitant of peace and forms our normal state.

Cheap rates for messages, however, affect the commercial aspect of the question too; and here we have divergence of opinion, because some people hail the Government scheme as tending to cheapen rates and

Dr von Bar, the well-known German authority on international law, attempts to find support for the contention that a belligerent should be at liberty to cut a cable connecting neutral with belligerent territory only when there is an effective blockade."

destroy monopolies, while others argue that unless the cheap rate conveys the message as rapidly as the dearer one business people will not use it, because in business transactions time is often equivalent to money.

On the other hand, there are many arguments which may be brought forward on behalf of all-British cables between our widely-separated Colonies and the mother country.

In the first place, the intimate connection tends to draw our Colonies close together with one another and to develop those feelings of unity and patriotism amongst them which have already given us such gratifying results and such brilliant promise. A cable which brings one part of the Empire in direct touch with another lying many thousand miles away encourages direct commercial intercourse, and stands as a conspicuous and tangible proof of the solidarity of the English-speaking race. This may to some appear a merely sentimental argument, and, if a message duly arrive, it may be contended that it is immaterial whether it has come direct from British hands or through a foreign channel. But, independently of the fact that all-British intercourse will be cheaper, and will therefore encourage social as well as commercial communications, the absence of foreign intervention certainly appeals to the imagination, and arouses a sentiment which we cannot afford to despise. Men, after all, are governed and influenced by sentiment rather than by reason, and of all sentiments that of patriotism has always shown itself the most powerful. A cable which connects England with Australia through Canada is more than a link—it is a band which binds three continents, three peoples, three governments, into one Imperial whole.

The new Pacific cable will, moreover, bring the

Commonwealth 10,000 miles nearer to Canada, and a message can travel from Vancouver to Queensland with only three transmissions as against at least a dozen of different nationalities by the older route. The tariff is reduced by half, while the speed also will be increased. More, therefore, than mere sentiment influences the demand in this case.

Again, the cable which chooses the farther distance, the deeper water, and the longer sections, even though some facility be sacrificed to sentiment, has this advantage, that it gives us a variety of route, takes into the connection new places, and substitutes strategy for commerce as the directing influence. The favourite trade routes have always been well looked after by private enterprise, and will always be well served through the competition of rival firms. Competition and variety of route make for economy, efficiency, and security. In deep waters, too, it is more difficult to injure the cables; and when several are widely separated more than one successful coup is necessary to seize and destroy them. Moreover, when one route is blocked, another will remain open. If, on the other hand, we depend on commercial lines only, we are exposed to the evils which a combination and monopoly will bring with them.

Those in favour of the new policy are able to say also that the other has had a long career, and that in striking out a fresh path we may wisely try whether we may not gain the benefit which change and competition often bring. We have so much already that is highly centralised in our Imperial system, our safety hangs so often on the strength and completeness of a single chain, that any alteration tending to multiply routes and connections is one to be heartily encouraged. Especially is it to be welcomed in the interests of our navy.

A group of roads all close together and converging on one spot are, militarily speaking, to be regarded as

one road: one force will block them all. So, too, with cables close together, the victory, or operation, which renders the destruction of one possible will also place all the others in jeopardy, whereas several widely separated and substantial successes, giving our opponents a local mastery for the time being, will be required to place communications, laid with other considerations besides those of trade in view, at the mercy of an enemy.

But what is really remarkable is that this question of an all-British cable has not only been urged on the Government by strategists, or those who may be described as bitten with the Imperial idea and governed by the spirit of militarism, but also by those interested in and influenced by the claims of commerce. Our chambers of commerce in many places have placed this cable amongst the requirements they have asked for from the Government, and we may be sure that their representations have not been lightly treated. If a thing is needed from the commercial point of view, and, at the same time, demanded by those who have to study the situation in which the Empire would be placed during war with another great Power, the case for it becomes a formidable one to upset, and we can understand why the all-British Pacific cable is, at the moment of writing, all but an accomplished fact.

But the impetus of the movement which called this cable into being will be by no means exhausted with its completion. The importance of a State-owned British Atlantic cable is also strongly urged, and a route is suggested for it which will be distinct from, and to the north of, the zone of the existing trans-Atlantic cables. It is claimed for this suggestion that by employing the latest improvements the new cable would earn more than enough to pay its annual charges, while at the same time the present cost of messages would be greatly

reduced. The more favourable terms of transmission would attract messages from the new Pacific cable through this route to England, and a really all-British connection with Australia through Canada would be established. Viewed in this way, a new Atlantic cable appears, indeed, to be the supplement of the Pacific one.

One of the arguments which has been advanced against the risks incurred in laying cables *viâ* foreign countries is that the use of a cypher code can prevent messages from being read and information being obtained by our opponents. But patience and ingenuity will disclose any cypher—provided there are enough messages sent, that the persons corresponding are known, and that the probable nature of the communications can be arrived at. A new and elaborate code is not easily established when war breaks out, and there are never more than a few staff-officers or expert civilians who would be available to utilise it. The pressure of work during war time is so great that a staff, already overdone, will be prone to fall back on cyphers with which officers are already acquainted and can utilise and interpret quickly; so that it would be a mistaken policy to pin our faith on the security of a cypher correspondence alone.

During the present war many messages have been sent in half-code and half-cypher form. If time were available, and the results likely to be worth the labour expended, the translation of such messages would be perfectly easy.

On the other hand the cutting of cables by warships is not quite so simple a matter as is sometimes assumed. In water more than 2000 fathoms deep some authorities state that cables may be considered quite safe. In shallower water, and against special appliances, they are certainly less so, but it is still by no means a simple matter to pick them up. Great difficulties are

often encountered even by the special experts and ships fully equipped for this particular purpose who attempt the task with a view to the execution of repairs. There are in foreign countries at present only a limited number of engineers who thoroughly understand such work, because most of the cables have been laid by, and are in the hands of British companies. So that in practice this risk is a smaller one than it looks on paper, although, with specially fitted ships and plenty of time, cables might be grappled or cut at considerable depths.

The experiences during the late Spanish-American war have supplied us with some valuable data on this subject.

At first the United States Government did not sanction the cutting of cables, and the Secretary to the Navy telegraphed to Admiral Sampson at Key West on the 25th of April directing that "telegraphic cables must not be interfered with till further orders."

An explanatory telegram was sent to the following effect: "Referring to your telegram *re* cables, my telegram applies to all cables. We are considering the desirability of declaring all cables neutral." *

The end of the cable which ran from Havana to Key West was, however, naturally taken possession of by the Government of the United States, and they thus controlled all communication along it.

But, on the 30th of April, sanction to destroy the cables on the south coast of Cuba was given. The *Eagle* was already at work on the 11th of the following month, searching in very shallow water for the cable which connected Cienfuegos and Batabanos along the coast farther to the West. Even under such favourable conditions the search was still fruitless.

On the same day, however, Captain M'Calla was more

* Quoted from "The Lessons of the Spanish-American War," by the late Admiral Colomb, R.U.S.I. Journal, Vol. xliii. p. 426.

successful, and was able to report that another cable running from Cienfuegos eastwards to Mazanillo had been found by boats working close in to the shore, and successfully cut.

Both these cables were wholly Spanish, simply connecting points along the southern coast of Cuba. Their destruction, therefore, opened up no international question, and this, doubtless, explains the willingness of the United States Government to interfere with them.

What is important in the incident is the fact that the boats had to go within 150 yards of the shore in order to get hold of the cable, and that they there met with such a heavy fire that, of the three cables which they managed to grapple, they could only sever two, and were forced to abandon the attempt to cut the third.

On the 16th of May the *Wampatuck* and the *St Louis*, ships which appear to have been reserved for this special duty, made an attempt to destroy the cable between Santiago and Jamaica. The enterprise was undertaken at night, but a patrol boat discovered the *Wampatuck*, and the attempt had to be abandoned.

Two days later another attempt was made, and in 500 fathoms of water, and somewhat more than a mile from Fort Movio, the cable was seized by a grapnel. The ships were too lightly armed to engage the fort which opened upon them, and were obliged to steam away slowly to sea, towing the cable after them.

On the following day these same ships endeavoured to cut the French cable from Guantanamo, but they were foiled in their attempt by the fire of a Spanish gunboat which was protecting it. But the next day the American ships sought the cable near Mole St Michaelas, on the western shore of St Domingo, and, keeping beyond the three-mile limit, grappled and broke it in deep water on the 20th of May.

Another attempt to cut a cable was made at Ponce,

on the coast of Porto Rico, but deep water and a rocky bottom baffled the Americans.

In fact, it became clear that specially-equipped vessels were necessary for cutting cables, and that any success which had attended the efforts so far made must only be regarded as examples of exceptional good fortune, occurring in what was to be normally regarded as a very slow and tedious operation.

Some two months later two local cables, from Mazanillo to Santa Cruz, and Santa Cruz to Jucaro, lying in shallow waters, were cut, but this success seems to round off the American record in these operations, and Cuba remained still in communication with Spain.

In the Far East, Commodore Dewey, after he had destroyed the Spanish squadron at Manila, requested the representative of the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company at Manila to allow him to utilise the cable in the ordinary way. The Spanish governor refused permission, whereupon Dewey cut the cable, and carried the end of it on board one of his ships. As he had neither instruments nor a trained staff with him it took a considerable time for him to turn his prize to account, and he was debarred also from utilising it for another reason. The Spanish Government had, by agreement with the Eastern Telegraph Company, the right of blocking the end of the cable at Hong- Kong, and this right they now availed themselves of, sealing the connection there, and thus cutting off Commodore Dewey and Manila too.*

These experiences are especially interesting, as being the first examples we have had of a nature of operations that may become common enough in future, and which, owing to the interests we have at stake, possess an

* The foregoing account of the American experiences in cable-cutting is taken from Admiral Colomb's lecture on the "Lessons of the Spanish-American War," which has been already referred to.

especial importance for us. They exhibit the difficulties which will hamper a Power even when it has procured a marked predominance at sea. No nation could have achieved a more pronounced success over a hostile navy than that of the Americans in the late war, but even with such success behind them, the difficulties encountered in cable-cutting were very great.

With a smaller measure of naval success might they not have grown to be practically insurmountable?

That is the problem to which we have to apply our minds. Granted that England may not decisively triumph in a naval war, the question remains as to whether we have substantial grounds for fearing that she may be as completely worsted as Spain was recently by America? And if she be not so worsted, will operations which proved so embarrassing to fleets that rode the seas in full triumph, promise any result to navies less confident and less secure from interruption? If Spain could not be cut off from Cuba till the very end of the struggle, are there not solid foundations for the arguments that endeavour to make light of the anxiety displayed by another section of thinkers who have studied the subject? It is at least right for us to weigh the question critically and carefully, and endeavour to view the matter in an atmosphere freed from preconceived notions or anything approaching prejudice. Whether by following commercial lines, but at the same time combating monopolies and cheapening rates, we shall not only benefit our commerce but improve our communications for war also, is an aspect of the question which is certainly not to be ignored. On the other hand, we should not, in our confidence as to our sea-power, the bearing of which on this question will be accentuated later on, forget that, while our cruisers might prevent wholesale cable-cutting in difficult waters, or in the neighbourhood of the great ocean roads that

they patrol, if certain distant coasts and shallow waters are left defenceless, an opponent may find a rapid raid profitable. The neighbourhood of a potentially hostile port would add to the chances of success against us. On the Grand Banks, off Newfoundland, shallow water and a sandy bottom favour cable-cutting enterprises. All the Atlantic cables, except one French and one German one, pass near to them, and five are laid quite closely together. They lie close, also, to St Pierre-Miquelon, on the south coast of Newfoundland. Twenty-four hours' steaming might well enable a small vessel to bring serious mischief to the whole system of cables that connect us with the farther shores of the Atlantic.

Without these cables the action of the North American fleet could not be directed from home. The Pacific squadron on the other side of the continent would be affected too, and would for some days be lost to our control and direction. It is considerations such as these that have raised the cry for the defence of our Atlantic cables at their western ends. Not only defence, but the provision of such ample stores of material for repair and appliances as shall enable any damage to be promptly made good. For a cable-depot might be as valuable a prize, as fit an object for a raid, as a coaling-station.*

St John's would, no doubt, be the spot for such a depot, but, if so, it must be fortified to repel a raid and cover the reserve stores and the repairing ships. There, too, should be the headquarters of a warship, which would, at the outbreak of hostilities, patrol and guard the regions where the cables are so vulnerable and so open to interference.

There are other strategical reasons, too, why St John's should be rendered more secure, but they lie

* An article by Mr P. T. M'Grath in the *Fortnightly Review* for September 1902 gives some interesting information on this subject.

outside the scope of our discussion, and need not be dwelt upon here. Before, however, we leave the subject, we may note again how, in every shape and form, responsibilities crowd upon us; how the calls upon army and navy are growing from all sides; how the very scientific inventions that in one direction add so much to our strength in another make demands that diminish the value of the gift. The statesman watching over the national expenditure must sigh for the days when there were fewer competitors to force the pace and the same standard of efficiency was not exacted. With all the interests of our Colonies, and our land and sea forces that have to be reconciled, no wonder if the problem grows complicated and wide divergences of opinion are proclaimed, and no wonder that finality seems ever flitting further before and evading us.

But in one respect, at least, we may arrive at unanimity and singleness of purpose. As we lay in stores of ammunition, and supplies and *matériel* generally, so must we keep a reserve of spare cables and materials for repair at our naval bases throughout the world.

Not only, however, to restore existing lines but to create new ones as circumstances may demand.

Just as in field warfare the engineers lay the field telegraph and connect the army as it moves forward with the base in rear, so in struggles on the waters will the headquarters of our fleets be kept in connection with the Admiralty at home, or even with squadrons detached for some particular purpose. The cable must, in fact, follow the fleet, and an important need, therefore, in Imperial defence which is sometimes lost sight of is that there should always be a reserve both of cables and of special ships and trained men who understand the business of laying them, just as there must be reserves of supplies and stores and coal and guns and ammunition.

During the Zulu war a cable intended for Australia was temporarily laid from Cape Town to Durban (which places, it may be noted, are still not in direct cable communication with one another) and our naval base in South Africa.

During our occupation of Port Hamilton we also laid what may be termed an emergency cable to connect that port with China.

When the British Fleet in 1878 made a demonstration and went to Constantinople, arrangements were made for keeping up communication with it by means of a submarine cable specially laid for the occasion.

Such are a few examples of theory carried into practice.

And no doubt, if in future we should set a blockading squadron in front of some hostile port, a cable would be rapidly laid, which would place the admiral in command in close touch with events in all parts of the world.

Rapid cable laying in time of war is, in fact, one of the problems of Imperial defence of first importance to us, for early intelligence in naval warfare, especially to a country such as ours, is as valuable as a reinforcement of many ships and men.

Fortunately, we can afford to face the present situation with equanimity, and as regards facilities for laying cables hold a marked pre-eminence as things stand at present.* It has been estimated by the leading authorities on the subject that the telegraph manufacturers in this country can, in full work, turn out 100 nautical miles of submarine cable per day. There are three large firms in existence and two of secondary importance. This estimate, it will be noted, is based on continuous full work being kept up and on a

* *Vide* the remarks of Mr Robert Kaye Gray, p. 1404, Vol. xliv. Journal R.U.S.I.

supply of gutta-percha equal to this heavy demand being assured.

Sir George Clarke in 1897, speaking at the United Service Institution,* placed the powers of cable production possessed by this country at 2000 nautical miles per month, an estimate which he subsequently explained in the discussion on Lieutenant Bellairs's paper (whose estimate was somewhat lower) to have been given him by three firms as far back as 1891.

But the advantages which we possess do not alone consist in those which enable us to lay fresh cables. If cable-cutting is to become a familiar feature of the the next great naval war, repairing and restoration will follow the processes of destruction. The power to cut may be counterbalanced by facilities for repair, and here we have little or no cause for anxiety.

In the discussion just referred to, Sir George Clarke stated that there were about thirty-eight cable ships in the world, with crews thoroughly trained for the work, and appliances adapted for the operations to be undertaken. Of these, there are only about four or five which do not sail under our flag, and, therefore, it is scarcely an exaggeration to represent us as holding a monopoly in such special operations as the repairing of damaged cables.

The fact is, that if we leave out of sight such exceptional localities as the neighbourhood of St John's, this question of the feasibility of cutting submarine cables in war time is another variant of the power with which command of the sea endows its possessors.

It may be conceded that, given a properly-equipped ship, skilled labour, and, say, twenty-four hours' time, it might be possible to grapple and cut a cable even in water from 2000 to 3000 fathoms deep.

* Journal R.U.S.I., Vol. xli. p. 1132.

Again, it may be granted * that the situation of the great cables of the world are already known, or that full information would be easily obtained by a Power at war with us. But, even conceding so much, unless that Power had become predominant, or nearly so, on the waves, the cutting of our cables would most probably still remain a far-off contingency.

In the first place the special ships should not find it easy to leave port and evade our fleets. The surest way of protecting cables would be to shut up in harbour their potential destroyers; and it is the method which naval strategy would very likely adopt.

Then the operation of grappling a cable, although with luck it might be successfully carried out in a short time such as has been named, would in deep water often prove a matter of considerable difficulty and delay. Be it noted further that the weaker navy would be obliged to seek deep water, so as to escape observation, and, because in deep water the results of a successful cutting would also be greatest owing to the difficulties involved in the repair of the mischief, the cable cutter may be tempted to try in them. The weaker power at sea will probably, therefore, seek the most difficult locality for its operations, and will, consequently, unless luck favour it to an extent, which we have no reason to anticipate will be the case, experience delay in carrying out its project. That delay will open up possibilities of interruption, and unless the luck is to be all on one side, a British warship or small squadron may very possibly appear on the

* We have never made any attempt to conceal the situation of our cables, and our cousins across the Atlantic have acted with equal frankness. The French are, however, less confiding, and, according to Mr P. T. M'Grath in the *Fortnightly Review* for September 1902, they have lately laid their largest submarine cable without the knowledge of its exact location having been allowed to leak out.

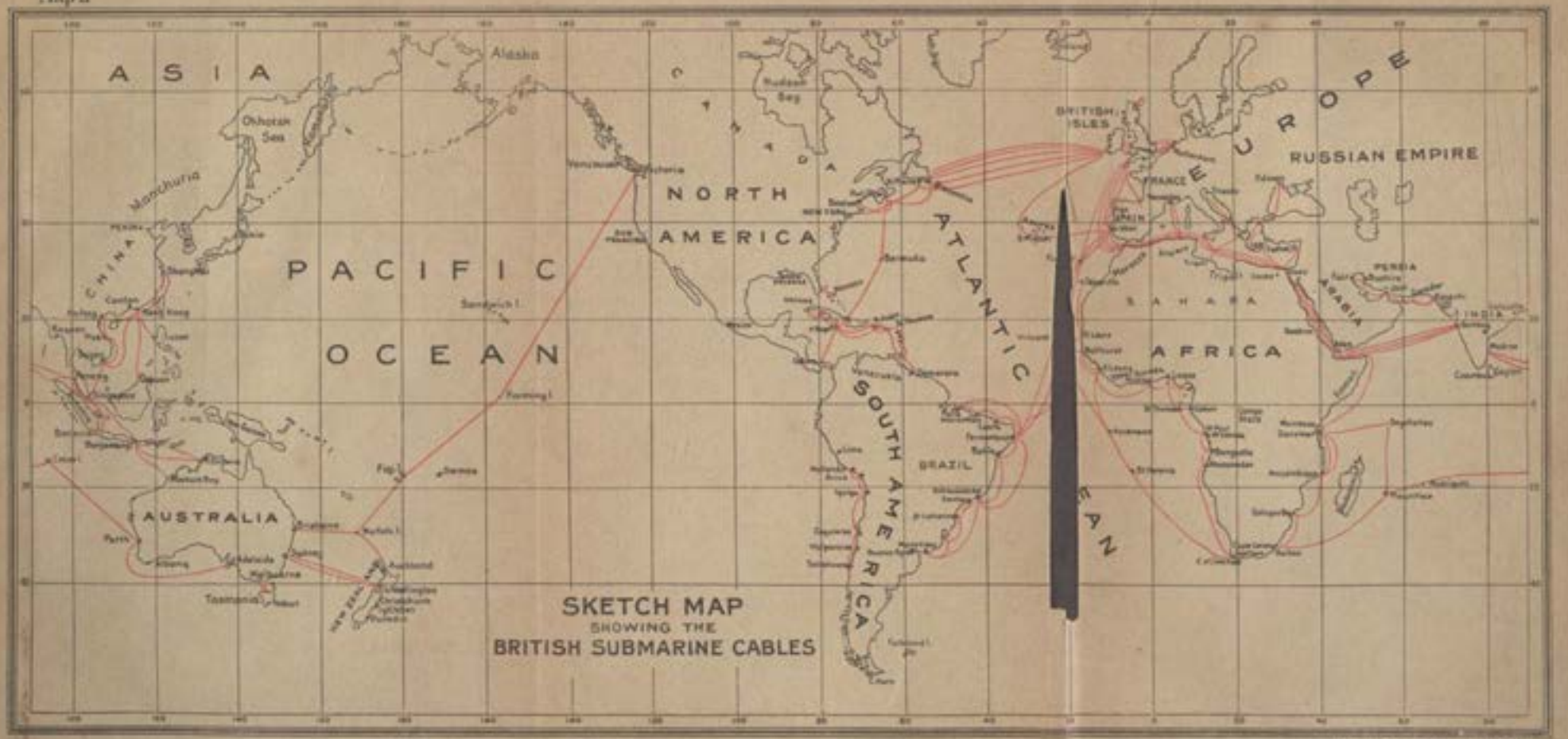
scene in time to cause the hasty abandonment of the operations.

Again, where several alternative routes exist, the cutting of one cable would not seriously embarrass us, and a very pronounced naval superiority would be necessary to allow cable-cutting vessels to roam the seas unhindered and conduct operations on a large scale undisturbed.

In the preceding pages nothing has been said as to wireless telegraphy, yet something, undoubtedly, possibly much of what I have had to dwell upon, will be discounted by the new invention. The temporary cables which are to follow the fleets may possibly be dispensed with; it is certain that communication with shores from ships at a distance to be reckoned by hundreds of miles will be possible. On the other hand, there remains the present openness to hostile interference to be overcome. But we are speaking of things as they are, not as they may be, and wireless telegraphy is still too immature in its widest developments for us to discuss it here.

Some reference also must be made to another great Imperial project and another means of communication which will supplement our great submarine cables. The Cape to Cairo Railway may still be a long way from assuming concrete shape. Of the 5000 miles or so that had originally to be traversed 1340 have been laid down, and, up to Bulawayo, the railway may be said to have proved a valuable commercial asset. The near future will probably find it as far as Salisbury; one day, no doubt, the track will reach the Victoria Nyanza. But, between Uganda and Khartoum, swamps and malaria threaten to bar the way. The present generation will not see the great project completed: it is doubtful whether even our grandchildren will be more fortunate. When, however, much of what

Map II


ASIA
Alaska
Okhotsk Sea
Manchuria
CHINA
PACIFIC
OCEAN
NORTH
AMERICA
CANADA
Hudson Bay
BRITISH ISLES
EUROPE
RUSSIAN EMPIRE
FRANCE
SPAIN
ATLANTIC
OCEAN
SAHARA
PERSIA
ARABIA
INDIA
AFRICA
SOUTH AMERICA
BRAZIL
AUSTRALIA
Tasmania
Fiji
Samoa
SKETCH MAP
SHOWING THE
BRITISH SUBMARINE CABLES

appeared visionary and impossible twenty years ago has already been accomplished, and Bulawayo is within the reach of a Cook's tourist, it would be rash to prophesy; but with our present knowledge the difficulties to a railway certainly seem all but insurmountable.

With the telegraph, however, it is very different: wires may run where railways would find impassable barriers. The cost is comparatively trifling, the risks far smaller. In a word, although it may be accepted as certain that we shall none of us ever see railway connection between Egypt and South Africa, we may count on telegraphic communication being established in the near future. Another means of communication of Imperial significance will then be added to those we already enjoy, and another link in the chain that binds the Empire together will be riveted.

## CHAPTER VIII

### OUR FOOD SUPPLY IN TIME OF WAR

THE question of our food supply is as closely linked with that of Imperial defence as is the feasibility of starving out a garrison connected with strategy in the field. If it be true that a combination of foreign Powers could cut off our supplies of food, even though our navy were unvanquished, our position is indeed hopeless. The operation of levying war on us would be reduced to a bloodless contest between brokers, and the purchasing of "futures" in corn; while the moving accidents and the element of uncertainty in war would be removed from the seas and plains to the counting-house. Putting aside for a moment controversies and suppositions which will be considered later, we may at once admit that the situation is one that must be regarded with extreme anxiety.

The main facts of the case, although the estimates of experts may slightly vary, are not seriously in dispute.

The acreage under wheat in Great Britain, according to the figures quoted in "The Statesman's Year-Book" 1902, has fallen from 3,630,300 in 1874, to 1,700,828 in 1901. In consequence, we have to import annually $22\frac{1}{2}$ million quarters of bread-stuffs, and of this, according to Mr M'Caskie,* about 3 millions come from our countrymen of Greater Britain, while $19\frac{1}{2}$ millions have to be supplied from somewhere else.

* *Times*, 19th December 1901.

In 1896 Mr R. B. Marston in his "War, Famine, and Food Supply," quoting from the "Corn Trade Year-book," pp. 35 and 36, put our total imports of wheat and flour at 25,078,300 quarters, and stated that of this total the United States contributed 10,920,000 quarters; Russia, 5,410,000; the Argentine Republic, 3,843,000; India, Canada, Australia, Uruguay, Chili, Roumania, etc., all contributing smaller quantities.

Captain Stewart Murray, in the very able lecture he gave at the Royal United Service Institution in February 1901, included Argentina under "America," and gave their total importation of wheat at 14,500,000 quarters, that of Russia and Roumania together at 5,000,000, and that from Greater Britain at the same figure I have quoted above. The supply from the United States is diminishing, while that from the Argentine is increasing, but the latter is a variable crop owing to local circumstances, and cannot be depended on. On the other hand, Canada is increasing her output of wheat, and in 1901, according to "The Statesman's Year-Book," sent us 6,696,710 cwts. as against 2,541,500 cwts. from Russia.

It is clear, then, that we are dependent on foreign imports for our supply of food, and that the United States and Russia contribute so largely between them to our needs that they may be said to have the market in their hands. India, Uruguay, Chili, or Turkey produce so little that they could not send us anything like enough were our principal supply to fail. Such a condition of things is manifestly highly abnormal. It implies an artificial condition of life full of danger, for what is unnatural and against our instincts is always to be mistrusted. It is of evil omen for us that Rome, the prototype of our Empire, was dependent on and ultimately ruined by a foreign corn supply, and that it fell because its civilisation and power rested on an unnatural foundation, and cheap grain from Africa

desolated Italy. The danger that threatens us is not only to be found in the obvious fact that the supplies of corn from abroad might be intercepted, because our navy would have so many duties to perform that it could not prevent the depredations of hostile cruisers. The facility of communication and the power of combination it brings with it, which is the conspicuous feature of modern life, has rendered it possible, so it is stated, for a corner in wheat to be established against us such as we have heard of being formed in the case of copper, of steel, of salt, and of any other commodity necessary to human existence, or largely in demand by our industrial population.

It is agreed that if one of the countries which principally supply us were to forbid the exportation of grain, the price of that commodity could be raised in all other markets of the world by brokers acting as agents for our enemies, bidding for, and buying up, the commodity which is essential to us. The richest country would, in this case, it is true, get what it wanted all the same, and we, having most money at our backs might count, therefore, on emerging triumphant from the contest.

But, I may ask, at what a price? Prices would rise enormously. That is admitted; but many think they would rise so far as to put bread altogether out of the reach of many consumers.

There are those, on the other hand, who emphatically deny that the corner could hold the field. The hostile broker would have to spend, at least, £100,000,000 to outbid us for the number of million quarters we were seeking. There would still, even then, remain grain in other parts of the world not outside our Empire; and to keep it from us the broker would have to go into the market again, and again spend more than £100,000,000 to keep it from us, perhaps as much as

double would have to be expended to forestall us, for we must suppose that the agents of our Government are active too, and would bid on our behalf. Is it probable or conceivable that a country or countries embarking on a war with the richest nation of the world would begin a costly struggle by spending such a sum as over £100,000,000 in an attempt to starve us out?

But it is contended that such an expenditure would not be demanded. Prices could be artificially raised without the whole of the world's grain supply being purchased. A private individual, Mr Leiter, a few years ago did succeed in doing this, although it should not be forgotten that he ruined himself in the effort. It is argued that as we should have to pay enhanced prices for the grain, the expenditure which brought the pinch of war home to the electorate of the country would not be wasted by the enemy, any more than the cost of armament or projectiles which enabled him to win a great battle. It would, in fact, only be necessary for the agents of foreign countries to bid against us to make us pay ruinous prices, just as if it be seen that a rich man is determined to have a horse he can be bid against at Tattersall's until he is compelled to pay an immense price. It is stated that the purchase of the whole visible supply of wheat in America, usually about 7,000,000 quarters, might be effected with a sum of about £11,000,000. When that occurred, everyone, foreseeing a further rise, would lay in a stock of wheat, and prices would at once be raised. The invisible supply would then be offered, our opponents would again bid against us for it, and prices, already high, would be driven higher still.

No doubt we should get the wheat in the end by paying enormous sums of money for it, but our weakness, meanwhile, would have been exploited; because the cost of war would have been made to hit us harder,

owing to our having to depend on foreign supplies, than any other nation which happened to be more self-supporting.

But even when the grain was obtained our difficulties, we are told, would not be over; for we should still have to bring it home across the seas, where the utmost vigilance of our navy would not prevent a certain percentage of cargoes being captured by the enemy's cruisers. That element of risk would again operate to further inflate prices.

The ravages of the *Alabama* are quoted, with much point, to show that although during the war of secession the Federals were absolutely predominant at sea the little Confederate steamer was able to inflict the heaviest injury on northern trade. With a number of swift cruisers on the watch, and our navy occupied with the fleets of an enemy not strong enough to meet it with any chance of success in pitched battles, but still immensely stronger than the South was as against the North during the American War, no doubt the risks of capture would be considerably greater than they were during that struggle.

Some idea of the figure to which prices might rise is supplied by the records of what has formerly occurred. According to Alison, who quotes from the Committee on the Corn Laws in 1814, the average prices of wheat per quarter in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were as follows:—

| | | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|---|
| During the ten years ending | 1705 | 42 | 11 |
| „ „ | 1715 | 44 | 2½ |
| „ „ | 1725 | 35 | 4½ |
| „ „ | 1735 | 35 | 2 |
| „ „ | 1745 | 32 | 1 |
| „ „ | 1755 | 33 | 2½ |
| „ „ | 1765 | 39 | 3½ |

| | | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|---|
| During the ten years ending | 1775 . . | 51 | 3½ |
| „ „ | 1785 . . | 47 | 8½ |
| „ „ | 1795 . . | 54 | 3¼ |
| „ „ | 1805 . . | 81 | 2½ |
| „ eight years to | 1813 . . | 101 | 9½ |

But in 1800 and 1801, when there had been a scarcity, the average prices of wheat had been as high as 112s. 8d. and 118s. respectively.

In 1812, when we were at war with America, the price of wheat rose as high as 126s. 6d. per quarter.

At the moment of writing, the price of wheat is only about 27s.

The war between Spain and America drove it up to 50s.

It may be admitted that, at anyrate for short periods, we should probably see these panic prices again, and wheat at 100s. would have to be faced for a time. That a rise might occur large enough to be extremely inconvenient is not seriously in dispute. The question is whether the pressure thus brought to bear on our people would be so heavy as to make them realise that the war could no longer be sustained.

There are many able and talented men who assert that the burthen would be intolerable, and that the risks involved are so great, that it is worth our while to pay annually in some shape or form (for every scheme ultimately means increased prices to the consumer, or increased taxation) what may be described as a premium of insurance. The importance of the question was somewhat accentuated in 1901, because, during the naval manœuvres of that year, the fleet which was supposed to be fulfilling duties that would fall to our navy in war did not come victorious out of a contest with a fleet supposed to be hostile.

It is also pointed out that since 1801, when wheat

rose to so prohibitive a price, our population has increased by 23,000,000; that our population then was largely self-supporting, while now we have 40,000,000 mouths which must be fed principally with foreign food.

During the great war with France bread riots and disturbances were not unknown; and that, too, at a time when the temper of the people was more patient than it is at present; when the voice of the masses could not make itself heard in the House of Commons, as is now the case; when the Government of the country was aristocratic, while now it is essentially democratic. It is proper to bring these points forward before I touch on the remedies which are proposed to meet a condition regarded by many with much apprehension. It is right to show that a genuine and sincere patriotism animates the pessimistic views expressed in widely separated quarters; that no taint of political feeling, as has sometimes unjustly been asserted, hangs about suggestions which have this in common with those of the Protectionists that they view the disappearance of wheat-growing in this country with dislike and apprehension.

The remedies which are put forward may with advantage first be stated, and a discussion of them follow.

Undoubtedly the remedy which would be at once most easy of application, most efficacious, and which would operate in the most natural manner, would be to impose such a duty on imported wheat as would raise its price to just over 40s.—the price at which it pays a man to grow wheat in England. It is claimed that such a duty would act automatically and almost instantaneously; that we should see from 2,500,000 to 3,000,000 more acres under wheat cultivation than is now the case; that the yield of home-grown wheat would be greater by from 10,000,000 to 12,000,000 quarters than it is at present, and that we could then

count on being able to tide over the difficulties which war would bring with it.

With reference to this I have nothing to say except that the scheme raises political issues of the first importance, and that, as soldiers must remain outside politics, it is impossible for it to be more than mentioned here.

That such a scheme is not within the realm of practical politics just at present will, however, be clear to all of us, and this fact alone is enough to put it out of our purview.

Another remedy which has not the same political objection is that the State should set granaries on foot, and that it should keep such a reserve of wheat in hand as would enable it to fight a "corner" by putting corn in large quantities on the market when an attempt to create one was made. A reservoir would be created, and the flood-gates opened at moments of crisis to obviate a rise in prices due to shortages, either actual or artificial.

Mr R. B. Marston, in his very able little book, propounds the plan of action.

He would store £30,000,000 worth of wheat, about the price of a year's supply, in fortified granaries. The Government would take under its control the entire year's import of foreign wheat, and would by this means keep the reserve always good. According to his scheme, all wheat or flour coming to our shores would be handed over to our Customs officers. The owner of the wheat would be guaranteed its full value by Act of Parliament. The Government would give the purchaser, not the new wheat which came from abroad, but a similar quantity of wheat from its granaries one year old, at the same price. Thus the wheat in reserve would be kept constantly in circulation.

We should by this means always have twelve months' supply of wheat in the country to fall back upon.

Further, the corn merchants who bought it would be restricted by Act of Parliament as to the price at which they resold it to the public, so that only a fair profit would be obtained, and the price of the loaf made from Government reserves would be fixed by law. By following this suggestion, it is claimed that we should, at a crisis, have time to grow corn and other food at home in such quantities as to make us, to a large extent, independent of foreign countries. The estimated cost to the country would be £900,000 a year, interest on the £30,000,000 alone. What the expenses involved in addition would be have been variously estimated at from £1,339,800 up to about £3,000,000. The total expenditure on this granary system might, therefore, amount to as much as £4,000,000 a year, and has been placed double as high, an estimate which is, however, an inflated one.

Granaries have, I believe, been successfully established in Hungary, North America, and Egypt; while at Malta we have an example of the storage of corn daily before our eyes.

The receptacles there are termed "silos," and several hundreds of them exist in the island. They are dug in the ground or hewn out of the rock in an oval shape, the oval running vertically downwards. Layers of barley straw to the thickness of a sheaf are placed all round the carefully cemented walls, with a thick layer at the bottom, before the grain is poured in. This is done to prevent absorption of moisture by the grain, which might otherwise ferment. It is, indeed, quite paramount that the silo should be absolutely free from damp, or the danger of fermentation will be always present. When the silo is nearly full more straw is is laid on the top so as to completely fill it up, a slab is placed on the opening, and hermetically sealed.*

* *Vide* Mr Critien's account quoted in Mr R. B. Marston's "War, Famine, and Food Supply."

Grain thus stored will, no doubt, keep good for a long time.

The capacity of these silos varies from 300 to 400 quarters each, and, when they are not defective, corn remains perfectly sweet for years: in a climate such as that of Malta for three or four. Should it, on inspection, show signs of fermentation, it is taken out, cured, and replaced.

It is evident, however, that a means of storage suitable for the Mediterranean might be quite unfitted for our purposes in England, and the system at Malta is quoted by Mr Marston more as an illustration than as an example to show what might be done in a different climate.

There are several objections to this scheme, the most obvious, and the one which will most appeal to us, being that an expenditure of several additional millions on our navy would render the chances of granaries being needed almost infinitesimal.

Nor is the idea of monumental forts round London to contain granaries one which will by any means commend itself to soldiers.

Mr R. A. Yerburgh, M.P., is the author of a scheme which resembles that of Mr Marston, but does not go so far. His national granaries would only keep about a third of a year's consumption in store, and that would be drawn from our own farms. The expenditure involved annually would therefore be much less, the normal course of trade would be less open to disturbance from Government action, the British wheat-grower might possibly benefit; but, on the other hand, the relief when the pinch came would be greatly reduced. Mr Yerburgh has placed the capital expenditure involved at a little over £17,000,000 for the purchase of 8,000,000 quarters of wheat.

In answer to those who objected that in "our de-

testable climate" it is impossible to keep wheat sound and hard when stored, the author of this scheme has stated that an experiment in the storage of British wheat has been recently conducted, and has met with complete success.

"In 1897 25 quarters of wheat of that year's harvest were bought from a farmer in Suffolk, dried by a new process in Berlin, then stored at Messrs Robinson's, Rochdale, in a granolithic concrete silo. It remained there till October 1900, when it was drawn out and placed in sacks. In February 1901 it was sent to Alford, Lincolnshire, to be ground."

It was found then to be in excellent condition, and yielded a higher percentage of flour than new English wheat.

Mr Yerburgh goes on to explain that the calculated working expense of his scheme—including depreciation and terminable annuities for fifty years issued at $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.—amounted to less than £1,000,000 a year, and that it was proposed to find the money by the reimposition of the 1s. duty on corn, which would, it was estimated, bring in £2,000,000 per annum,* a sum sufficiently large to cover any unforeseen increment of expense.

There are those again who think that private firms might be subsidised with a view of inducing them to keep a reserve of corn in their stores, which would be officially inspected from time to time, and would be kept up for distribution at moments of great emergency.

Others hold that farmers might be subsidised in order to enable them to keep their wheat in stacks. Formerly, when financial pressure did not compel farmers to thresh to pay the rent, such a course was the custom in the eastern counties of England; and

* *Vide* letter to *Times*, 30th January 1902.

it is said that such a method of storing would not in the least cause deterioration, while it would obviate the expense of granaries and the risks of fermentation. A sum of 2s. a quarter has been suggested as a sufficient bonus to compensate growers for the loss of interest they would experience in not converting their corn into money at once. But another 2s. a quarter would also be demanded to make good the depredations of vermin, and something in the way of bounty would have to be arranged for, too. Altogether it is calculated that it would cost Government £1,000,000 a year in order to ensure 4,000,000 quarters of corn being always in this way available.

A far-reaching scheme by which arrangements would be made, during peace time, to place all the inhabitants of these islands on rations when war broke out, has also been put forward with much ability by Captain Stewart Murray.

At a time when the army and navy estimates are both far higher than the expenses of the war are alone responsible for, and are very unlikely ever to be reduced to the figures that a few years ago were held by many to be excessive, further additions to taxation not intended to strengthen our armaments but to provide for contingencies should they be found insufficiently powerful, are naturally very jealously scanned and very searchingly examined. Prevention is better than cure. It must appear more logical to render yourself secure against attack than to spend the money which would help to render you so on arrangements to provide for defeat. I shall have more to say on this head presently, but the conditions of life in these islands have become so highly artificial and abnormal that it is a fair answer for those who would legislate at once for our food supply in war to say that the best weapon is useless if the man is

starving, that the most muscular arm will fail when the brain and stomach are insufficiently nourished.

There is, undoubtedly, a strong case in favour of foresight and precaution; although, perhaps naturally, the urgency of the situation has been somewhat unduly accentuated.

Sir George Clarke has stated that there is always a supply of food equal to a six months' demand in our islands.

Lord Wolseley does not consider that in war time we need have any cause for fear as to our food supply.

Mr Mulhall thinks we ourselves raise enough to enable us to tide over five and a half months.

Captain Stewart Murray's estimate is from four and a half to five months.

Sir Howard Vincent has placed our powers of endurance, if the supply from abroad were cut off, at sixty days. On the other hand, some experts have placed it as low as a few weeks. Thus authorities differ; but that it is a most unsatisfactory feature in our prosperity that land should be going out of cultivation in England, and that the agricultural population should be steadily drifting to the towns, almost everybody will agree. Both questions are closely connected with that of our food supply, and are themselves offshoots of a larger one.

Yet I must confess that it is not possible to welcome with enthusiasm some of the remedies suggested to deal with the particular variant of a big question which we are discussing under the heading of this chapter.

That one which would introduce a mild measure of protection is not, as I have said, within the sphere of practical politics. Protection may possibly come, but it certainly will not be accepted soon enough to form an immediate remedy for the evils we suffer under,

and independently of, other considerations. It is not therefore worth while for us to discuss it here.

With regard to another class of remedy:

Those who oppose the acquisition of stores of grain by Government to prevent a "corner" being created point to the enormous expense involved, the dislocation of business that such action would bring in its train, and the uncertainty as to whether the money might not be ultimately wasted; because those who attempted to make the "corner" would very probably burn their fingers in the attempt, and the "corner" would never be established at all.

The process of buying stores of corn by the Government, or of drawing our supplies principally from our own Colonies, would all tend to drive up the price of corn, and would increase the price of bread to our working-classes, and it is contended that while they had to bear this charge in peace time, they would still be called upon to face the increased price of bread in war.

The arguments that dwell on the risk of our supplies of grain being captured on their way across the ocean have perhaps not sufficiently allowed for the privileges of the neutral flag, under which the grain might be consigned to agents on the Continent, and come to us through them, or reach us direct. Under the Declaration of Paris there seems to be nothing to prevent either.

It has been also pointed out that the war risks would not probably be so great as is supposed. The rise in the price of the commodity would cover the war premium, and the permanent price would not be so intolerable as to be beyond the powers of our people to bear. There might be a very great and sudden temporary rise, but the big prices would call forth resource and enterprise, so that the demand would be duly answered by a supply.

The effect of the Declaration of Paris might be calculated upon to counterbalance the greater risks our modern conditions of life have brought with them. We are not the only country which relies upon a supply of wheat from abroad, although we are enormously more dependent on such a source of supply than any other nation. Measures by a great corn-growing country in the nature of a prohibition of export of corn would affect the whole corn trade of the world, and the interests of others besides ourselves would suffer. If all neutral nations were made to feel the pinch of war with us, a belligerent would hesitate long ere he adopted tactics which would make his cause a very unpopular one.

The great extent of our coast-line, somewhere about 2000 miles, the numerous indentations and harbours which it possesses, would, moreover, render a blockade of our ports an operation so difficult that in the light of past experiences it may well be termed impossible. High prices would justify the risks involved. Blockade-running would become a trade, and would tempt the most capable and adventurous spirits of the world to a certain and exciting means of making money. That since Mr Marston formulated his scheme the sources of our foreign corn supply have undergone a change is a factor in the question which should also be mentioned. In 1896 the United States sent us 10,920,000 quarters of wheat and flour. The supply from Russia was the next largest, and amounted to 5,410,000 quarters. Argentina came next, sending us 3,843,000. That the possibility of war with one of the above-mentioned Powers supplied a basis for the apprehensions of those who then took up the question is manifested throughout all their arguments. But the situation at present is by no means the same as it was even six years ago.

Next to the United States our greatest contributor of wheat and flour is the Argentine Republic. Then comes Canada, while Russia is only fourth in the list.

Therefore as against one particular Power the situation has improved; and there are grounds for hope that as time goes on we shall be less at the mercy of foreign nations than we are at present.

Nine years ago Lord Playfair stated that in twenty years America would need almost all her food supply for her own people. Eleven years hence, therefore, even allowing for a margin of error, the capacity of American supply will be greatly less than it now is, while it is probable that the demands of other countries in Europe also changing their character from agricultural to industrial communities will be greater. The output from India, Canada, and Argentina, will most probably have grown considerably, while South Africa may have begun to contribute her share; so that there is a solid foundation for the argument that natural causes are at work which will, without intervention of Government, operate to place the foreign food supply of the country either in the hands of our own Colonists, or at anyrate with those who are not to be reckoned amongst our potential foes.

Moreover, if there were stores of corn in the country at the commencement of a war the feeling of uncertainty as to when the Government meant to open them would certainly tend to prevent speculation, and with the disappearance of speculation there would be diminution also of enterprise. When the *force majeure* of Government intervention was hanging over, and might upset the market, and schemes depending on the state of the market, the active speculator, who, while enriching himself, would benefit us also, would hesitate before he cast his net in the troubled waters. At the

outbreak of war, the very moment when we should most need them, it would be most detrimental to our interests that the imports of corn should he checked in any way. It will be understood, therefore, that with every sense of the gravity of the issues involved, statesmen of both parties may well demur to taking any steps in a direction where the effect of action is so difficult to forecast, and where interference may so easily put the nice balance of economic forces out of adjustment. The remedy might prove worse than the disease unless the straightforward course of a measure of protection pure and simple were adopted. And that measure is, as I have said, one which belongs to the highest and most disputed questions of policy, and must be put on one side by a writer who does not deal with a problem so purely political.

In truth, however, the mention of protection gives a certain balance to our argument, and recalls us from the region of speculation to the chill atmosphere of everyday life.

We must not forget that this question of food supply, is only one aspect of the disabilities and difficulties which a state of war with a great Power would bring upon us.

All through the previous chapters the fact that we belong to an Empire based on commerce has been steadily kept in view. It runs through the web of our whole political system like a golden thread. It is not only the want of food that will kill us if our intercourse with other countries be destroyed, if the channels through which we draw our food are either empty or stopped. Of what good will food be to artisans and factory hands who can no longer get work and who have, in consequence, no money? Why did people want bread at the period of the French Revolution when a bun might have been bought for a penny?

Raw material is as vital to the life of the nation as is corn. If it will not be possible to get corn, neither will it be possible to get cotton and other kinds of raw material. The cry would soon be raised, therefore, that we should lay in reserves of raw material as well as food. A huge rise in the price of cotton would, indeed, have a more disastrous and permanent effect on the prosperity of the country than interference with its food supply, for our industries could no longer compete with those of foreigners, already pressing on in close rivalry with us everywhere, and when once custom is lost it is not easily regained. Gigantic, therefore, as would be the expense of storing corn, were we to embark in the undertaking, we should be pressed to carry our principles further by those whose interests were at stake and who feared a shortage in raw material almost as much as one in flour.

Neither could we logically differentiate between corn and meat. Meat, too, is imported in large quantities, and is as necessary to life in England as is bread. The demand for State storage might very likely not stop even with meat or with cotton. Other articles of food and merchandise would no doubt find their advocates and be represented as indispensable. When once interference on the part of the State is let loose, it is difficult or impossible to set a limit to its action.

If we apply our minds to these various arguments and representations we must see that, on the one hand, it is the sense of patriotism which has prompted many to proclaim to their countrymen the dangers in the present condition of things. We cannot, on the other hand, dismiss as mere official obstruction or party feeling that sense of responsibility in administering the affairs of the country which deters Ministers from accepting the contentions put before them or

incites the Opposition to make light of them. The more moderate of those who are anxious as to our food supply in time of war do not place any highly-coloured pictures before us. They do not draw gloomy representations of a defeated navy, a close blockade of our home ports, or a total stoppage of our food supply from over-sea. They simply suggest such a great rise in articles of food as will bring about disastrous results in the closely congested industrial communities of these realms.

No one will deny that wheat may easily attain a price of 100s. a quarter, and that would mean a three-fold rise in the price of bread.

Again, it is said that our poorer working-classes number 7,000,000 souls, and we are asked to consider how long these people are likely to be able to stand such a rise as I have hinted at. Would not their resolution give way before our navy had driven the hostile fleets off the seas, and might they not then, by constitutional means or otherwise, attempt to bring such pressure to bear on the Government as would force it to patch up a disastrous peace? Those who best appreciate the weakness and limitations of party government cannot afford to scoff at such a presentation of the problem, and those who use the argument that a whiff or two of grape-shot will bring everybody to their senses have yet to find the politicians who will give the order to fire. That such a remedy should be brought forward as a practicable one alone justifies the contention that the situation is one full of dangerous elements.

While endeavouring, however, to do full justice to what are not to be dismissed as hysterical and exaggerated views we must not let ourselves lose sight of the solid grounds on which confidence reposes. We have faced a European combination

against us in the past when, it must be admitted, our food supply was not dependent on the bounty of foreigners, but when, on the other hand, the forces of disorder and revolution in the country were more formidable than they are to-day; when the stability of the throne itself was less assured; when a rebellion and invasion had only just been met and beaten back in Ireland; when we were removed by less than fifty years from "the '45"; and when many were alive who had seen an invading army penetrating into the very heart of England.

There is solid ground for reassurance when we examine the history of the past. We came out of the great struggle with France reinvigorated rather than enfeebled. Wheat, which on an average of five years prior to 1792 had been sold at 5s. 4d. a bushel, had risen on an average of five years ending with 1802 to 10s. 8d., and on an average of five years ending with 1813 at 14s. 4d. a bushel. Here we see the price of bread nearly tripled. Prices rose all round in consequence, and those who did not live by buying and selling were ultimately reduced to great straits: straits that were lamentable and deplorable, but which did not mean national disaster.

We cannot here pursue the subject further; it is only referred to so that we may remember what our forefathers endured: what they faced, not for a short time, but for many years, how the Government unflinchingly stuck to its purpose, and in the end triumphantly carried it through; how the country emerged from the tremendous contest stronger, richer, and more determined than before.

Some, no doubt, went under, but what one man lost another gained. There was a vast redistribution of the wealth of the nation, but the sum of all the wealth was enhanced. The individual may have perished;

but the community survived to flourish in a vigour and luxuriance previously undreamt of.

After the recent exhibition of the patriotism and self-sacrifice which are still living forces in the country, there seems at least room for doubt as to the want of it amongst even the poorest of our working-classes. During the siege of Ladysmith not only did our men starve without complaining or any thought of giving in, but the women and children who remained in the place suffered the heaviest privations with patience, constancy, and determination. The prolonged struggle of the South against the North during the American War of Secession was carried on by civilians at the expense of personal comfort, health, and of life itself. The example of Paris, and, indeed, of the whole of France in 1870, points the same way, and it is not unreasonable to hope that what our people have done before, what, in the Colonies especially, they are doing now, they will be prepared to do again.

No more than what has been endured in times past would be asked from them in future, for it is not at all likely that our food supply, while we held command of the sea, would be so much interfered with as to bring food to famine prices for more than brief periods. The wealth of the country could, if necessary, be called in to compete with the foreign brokers who were engaged in buying up the corn of the world. Being the richest country, England would certainly prove a formidable competitor, and the prices we should be able to offer would, with magnetic influence, attract what we wanted to our shores. Even the predominant power at sea has not, in the past, always succeeded in establishing a blockade. In 1854-55 Russia, unable to contest the supremacy of the sea with the Allies, yet managed to convey supplies of corn from the rich corn lands of the the Don across the Sea of Azov to the garrison of

Sebastopol. When at length our fleet forced the straits of Kertch and stopped these supplies, it was too late to be of service, for such ample stores had already been collected by means of the waterway left open that its closing did not seriously affect the situation.

It may be argued that I have quoted an isolated instance, and that what actually did happen should never have been allowed to occur. It may be replied that it is safer to reason from actual facts than from theories. Again, while we were in command of the sea it would be absolutely impossible to stop our food supply. If what occurred in Russia in 1854, and happened in the case of the Southern States of America not ten years later, could be brought about when the mastery of the waters was in undisputed possession of the Allies and of the Federals, it would be a superhuman task to blockade all our ports.

Partial obstruction would not starve us out, and we have nothing more severe than partial obstruction to be afraid of. If the command of the sea passes to our enemies, then neither food nor raw material can reach us. Our exports as well as our imports will fail. There will be an end of industry in the country, and there will be an end of us. We shall fall back to the position of a second or third-rate Power, and no efforts on our part will avert that fate. Invasion would be possible; our Colonies would be swept away; India could no longer be held; we should perish, and the loss of food would be of no more moment to us than it would be to a human being who was laid low by two or three diseases, each incurable and each certain to be immediately fatal.

While we have money we shall be supplied with food; at a high price, no doubt, but not at a ruinous one. There is no way out of that; but in order that

the price may not be prohibitive, money to keep our navy invincible must be spent now. As in every other consideration connected with Imperial defence we, in fact, eventually get back to the naval one, which does, and must, underlie them all. If our people cannot face the prospect of potential hunger and war prices for food, they must spend their money now to render war with us unprofitable to our enemies and of little more than some inconvenience to ourselves. War on such terms will not be levied on us; and if it were we should win it by our staying power. The artificial raising of prices may, and possibly will be tried by our foes, but they will be no more triumphant in war time, provided we can keep our superiority at sea and our communications abroad open, than they are likely to be successful in times of peace. As long as supplies exist, can be brought to our shores, and can be paid for, they will be forthcoming. The evidence of experience points to the impossibility of impounding a supply involving such huge figures as it does in our case.

The provision of an open road across the seas is a matter for our admirals. Until they are confident that our naval strength is such that we can feel sure as to the road being open, it must be better to spend money on securing this primary condition of our existence as an Empire than on remedies for the consequences of our neglect.

When we have done all that we can in that direction we may begin to consider how high prices for food in war time can best be combated by legislation.

# CHAPTER IX

## THE PROTECTION OF OUR COMMERCE

IN venturing to discuss such a subject as the protection of our commerce an officer not belonging to the navy would be bold indeed to suggest any scheme of action either strategical or tactical, and I shall certainly not make any such attempt. Nevertheless, even the humblest effort to elucidate the study of Imperial defence cannot afford to omit all reference to this portion of the subject. To do so would be to leave one of our main difficulties untouched. I will, accordingly, endeavour to put some of the broader features of the problem before my readers, speaking always with the diffidence which one not an expert in the matter must feel.

There are two aspects from which the question can be regarded. In the view of many, an opponent might confine his efforts to destroying and capturing our merchant vessels, and while he avoided decisive engagements with our fleets and squadrons might seek to wear out the patience and determination of our people by cutting off the supplies of raw material which give them work and wages. Without, or even with but slightly reduced wages, it would become difficult for many a workman's family to exist. Continued destitution induces ill-health, and sickness will weaken the stoutest heart. The prices of the necessaries of life must rise enormously during war with a great Power, and the gloomiest prospect is opened

when greater expenses and reduced earnings for our struggling poor are in contemplation. A Fabian policy which never allowed our sea-power to plant a heavy blow, nor gave a target to our battleships, would, in the opinion of many, be difficult to meet, and might bring so much ruin in its train that peace might be accepted by us. It is certain that the lessons of history do not give foundation to such views, and another and sounder opinion is held by the highest authorities on the subject. An attempt to destroy us through our commerce will not succeed unless and until we can no longer command the highways of the ocean. The *guerre de course* will never prove a substitute for naval victories any more than guerilla warfare can decide the fate of nations on the shore. That it will bring privation and poverty is true; that the hardships and barbarities of war can be prolonged by it we know; that there is good reason, too, why we of all others should especially fear such a visitation, and take precautions to deal decisively with it, will be presently shown. But something smaller than a menace of annihilation demands preparation, and due foresight is never out of place whether panic be in the air or not.

What our trade means to us has been insisted on over and over again throughout these pages. Reduced to figures the situation is actually this, that whereas the gross annual value of property and profits assessed to the Income-Tax in the year ended 5th April 1900 in the United Kingdom was, according to the Statesman's Year-Book for 1902, £788,023,603, the value of our imports and exports of merchandise alone amounted to £870,584,718.

In the face of such figures anxiety is not unnatural, and the demand for increased protection for our commerce cannot be described as unreasonable in

view of certain other factors in the problem that we shall now proceed to discuss.

Extracts from Lloyd's "Register of British and Foreign Shipping" show that the total tonnage of the steamers and sailing-vessels of the United Kingdom in the year 1901-02, omitting those under a hundred tons, amounted to 13,656,161 tons, while that of our Colonies was ,1052,245 tons. The combined total, therefore, amounts to 14,708,206 tons. The tonnage of the merchant-shipping of all the remainder of the world combined together, including that on the great lakes of North America, amounted to 15,892,304 tons; so that we may be said to own almost half the merchant-shipping of the world.

If, however, only ocean-going steamships are considered the proportion is considerably greater. But even taking the proportion of the first figures, the task which falls on our navy when called upon to protect the vast bulk is greater than that which a state of war would exact from any other country. Our navy would, in fact, be called upon to safeguard about the same amount of tonnage as would fall to all the other navies of the world combined together. There can be no manner of doubt that, relatively to other Powers, the strength of our navy has diminished, and that, as there has been no corresponding decline in the responsibilities which our warships have to undertake, the task set them now is more difficult than it was when last we were engaged in a war that threatened our commerce. Countries which were of little or no importance as naval Powers at the commencement of the last century have now become of the first class. It is unnecessary to specify names or make a careful analysis of strength: the fact is one which is patent to all and is not open to contention. We have done a great deal of late, and it is not likely that in the future our navy will be neglected

as it has been more than once in our history; but we shall not in times of peace again stand so pre-eminently first as we stood at the beginning of the last century. It is probable, too, that we have suffered in relative quality as well as quantity. A hundred years ago the navy of France was still reeling under the blow the Revolution had dealt her. The senior officers had been proscribed as aristocrats and had disappeared at a moment when there was no one to take their place. Masts and sails called for manual dexterity and an acquired activity from sailors. To be an efficient seaman personal agility, readiness, and even physical strength of a high order were required. The instincts, sympathies, and education of a large seafaring population gave England an advantage here, which all the artificial encouragement and drastic measures of Napoleon could not make up for. Captains transferred from the merchant-service could not vie with such bands of brothers as a Nelson was able to attract —men, from boyhood upwards leaders by birth and hereditary instinct, trained to the trade of war, their military virtues stimulated by the example of senior, and the emulation of junior officers.

On the other hand the figures are not so alarming as they may seem. The proportion of war to merchant-ships is undoubtedly very much higher in other countries than it is in our own. A calculation * made a few years ago showed that the two sea-powers next in importance to ourselves possessed about $38\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of their floating vessels of all descriptions in the form of vessels of war for the protection of the remaining $61\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., while we had about 12 per cent. of our vessels in the shape of warships. But the British navy is still predominant, and the proportion it bears to the merchant-shipping is small

* "Journal of United Service Institution," Vol. xlii. p. 515.

only because of the enormous bulk to which the former has attained; because, in other words, we have achieved the position of monopolising the carrying trade of the world. We have never deliberately organised a navy either to develop or protect our commerce. Of late years in certain countries quite a different policy has been set on foot. The strong navies are being built up to protect the commerce, not only that is, but that is to be; or there may be ulterior motives beyond the mere protection of commerce. But into this part of the subject we need not penetrate. Both in training and in quality of ships we have still an advantage; nor have the figures any real bearing on the question of naval strength. We have an immense advantage, too, in the possession of more naval bases and coaling-stations and more defended harbours than other Powers. But it will appear, as this chapter develops, that the true form of commerce protection lies in the mastery of the routes which commerce traverses. The right of the road falls to the strongest—that one who is militarily the strongest and can bring the greatest force to bear at decisive points. It is, in other words, the sum of the fighting forces of a country, not their proportion to its wealth or extent or population, that decides campaigns. And victory draws with her in the folds of her robe many minor gifts besides the trophies which she triumphantly holds aloft.

While, however, there may be no solid ground for alarm because our responsibilities are great as long as our fighting force is still pre-eminent, the figures which show the enormous proportion which our mercantile-marine bears to that of the rest of the world have a very important bearing on the methods that we must resort to in preparing to defend our commerce. In the first place, it appears that the old system of

convoys is not likely to be undertaken by our navy any longer. With so vast a mercantile-marine to be protected cruisers would be required by the hundred; more, probably, than we could man in war time, and more than the country could be prevailed upon to pay for in time of peace. The cost would, in fact, be prohibitive, and the drain on the navy so great that her more pressing duties would be greatly interfered with.

The navy may be able and willing to do again what it has done before. As a tactical problem it very possibly is easier to protect convoys now than it was before the days of steam. But financial and strategical objections are not the only difficulties in the way. In business matters time is money, and the collection of the ships to be safeguarded, and the arrangements for their protection, would all take a long time. So great a delay and dislocation of business would supervene that our mercantile interests in every part of the world must suffer to an extent only less than that which the actual capture or destruction of cargoes would entail. All who could secure their services would inevitably avail themselves as much as possible of neutral vessels, and we should see a large proportion of our carrying trade passing away from us.

The tactical aspect of the question calls on us to consider whether the invention of steam has, or has not, facilitated the guarding of a great flotilla of ships; whether such great assemblages of vessels do not lie perilously open to the long-range fire of modern artillery; whether they would not offer tempting chances to the enterprise of torpedo boats. Such points as these all have additional bearing on the subject, but they are technical matters for naval men to decide upon, and with them we need not here concern ourselves.

It is, at anyrate, manifest that, apart from purely tactical considerations there are grave difficulties and disadvantages in any system of protecting commerce that pins its faith on convoys.

The form of action that will most probably commend itself to those who have to face the responsibility will be the more drastic method of seeking out, bringing to action, and overcoming the main fighting strength of the enemy. If they will not face the risk of destruction or capture of their ships in the open, but fly for shelter to their ports, they will be there blockaded or masked as has been already explained, and we shall always have to keep up such a superiority in battleships as will enable us to carry out such operations in front of all the principal strongholds of our foes.

But some time must often elapse before even the most powerful navy has completely asserted its superiority, and the process of blockading is not likely to be one that can ever be carried to the limits of perfection. In the one case lapse of time, which in mercantile affairs means loss of money, and in the other the chances of evasion and the escape of hostile cruisers, may tempt owners to seek their profit by consigning their cargoes to a neutral flag, and thus endeavour to escape from the straits in which war has placed them.

But if the very volume of our merchandise militates against its preservation by means of convoys, the difficulties it imposes on any general adoption of the neutral flag system are quite insurmountable. Undoubtedly we should lose some of our commerce in this way, and the loss of even a small fraction of the huge total would amount to a sum that we should very distinctly feel; but we could never lose anything like all, because half the commerce of the world—which

is about what we now convey—would demand more transport than the rest of the world can supply. If the trading vessels of neutral Powers could not carry all that fell from us in addition to what they now can ship, either the whole commerce of the world would collapse, as well as our own suffer, or our ships would have to follow their cargoes. The wholesale transfer of our merchant-shipping is not the matter of a moment, and there are many and serious difficulties in the way of the operation. Moreover, it might not be effectual, because it might not be respected.

To build foreign ships to replace such of ours as were thrown out of use would be a gigantic task, and again could not be accomplished in time to make the new vessels useful substitutes. It is probably not unreasonable, therefore, to assume that both the expedients of protecting our commerce by means of forming and safeguarding convoys, or by its consignment to a neutral flag, are not to be entertained as a means of securing it.

And this brings us to consider how the Declaration of Paris has affected us. By that Declaration, as has been indicated, a belligerent may carry on his ordinary trade unmolested by an enemy by transferring it to the protection of a neutral flag. Unless neutral ships are therefore found to have overstepped in some way the privileges of their neutrality the goods of our foes would be secure from us. But as the volume of our commerce is so great that it could not, even if we wished it, be transferred away from us, the advantages accruing to belligerents under the Declaration would be withheld from us. It is further contended by many who speak with authority on the subject that we shall now lose one of the weapons which we wielded most effectively to subdue our enemies in former times. For the effect of our great naval

victories was not only the capture and destruction of the opposing ships of war, but also to drive hostile commerce off the seas. The property of those who fought us was never secure from depredation after it had left the shelter of their ports.

Hostile ships carrying neutral cargo and neutral ships carrying hostile cargo were alike open to our ravages. We inflicted a more lasting and permanent injury on our antagonists by blockading their harbours and hunting down their merchantmen on the seas than by sinking or towing into port their battleships and frigates.

Since the Declaration of Paris, however, a vigorous attack on the commerce of an enemy would drive it into the hands of a neutral, and we should be unable to exert our strength in what would often be its most telling direction. On the other hand, it may be argued that in any war in which we were neutral we should, as the greatest carrying Power in the world, feel the benefit of the provisions which so greatly favour neutrals: anything that benefits them must in an especial degree benefit us. But again this is denied, and it is contended that the cargoes of belligerents would be consigned anywhere rather than to a flag which has provoked so much jealousy abroad.

To pursue such questions as are here briefly indicated would lead us far and in a direction, moreover, in which we do not desire to proceed. Political, administrative, and other questions such as are not strictly germane to our inquiry are involved. It may, however, be pointed out that the loss sustained by our opponents, owing to their trade being transferred to neutral hands, would not in itself be inconsiderable; because it is probable that some of it would remain alienated after the war was over, and the neutral who intervened would derive more than temporary benefit from his undertaking.

In any case, we have set out on this inquiry in the spirit of accepting things as we find them, and the Declaration of Paris is a great fact, which, whatever we may think of it, we must be prepared to face. Moreover, even if the most gloomy view be taken of that Declaration, the main argument which entrusts the safety of our commerce to the supremacy of our navy remains unaffected. If we cannot shelter ourselves or derive benefit from any of its clauses, the more need to trust to our strength.

That those dependent on our commerce must appreciably suffer from a state of war, cannot, however, be denied, nor could it ever be otherwise. It is, in the first place, very probable that our sailing-ships would disappear from the seas entirely, and that in itself would represent a serious loss.*

It is certain too, that, however close our blockade, swift cruisers would somehow manage to evade it, and be at large to become a terror to our merchantmen. The Northern blockade may have been extended over a long coast-line during the American war of secession, but, on the other hand, the whole energies of their navy could be turned to the task of sealing the Southern ports. Yet the *Sumter* escaped from the Mississippi in 1861, and the *Nashville* ran out of Charleston. Fast modern ships are more difficult to pen than were these, and experiment at our naval manœuvres has proved what they can do. Vice-Admiral Baird blockaded Bantry Bay in 1888, and was especially on his guard to prevent the egress of his opponents. In spite, however of search-lights, in spite of most careful arrangements, and without the intervention of fog or rain, three ships got free, and that too, without being sighted

* In 1901-1902 the number of our sailing-ships of 100 tons and upwards, was 1773, and their tonnage 1,602,767 tons, while our Colonies owned 989 ships of 366,259.

or, recognised. The evaders were unpursued, and, having effected a junction with some of their friends from Lough Swilly, disappeared for a time from the ken of their opponents. What their subsequent operations were, we need not here discuss, the point we wish to make being simply the practicability of evading a blockade.

What effect a few steamers of a speed of twenty-three knots might at the present day exert, not only in destroying our commerce, but in watching and dogging the steps of our fleets, may be left to the imagination. It would depend greatly on what fuel and supplies they could obtain, but, if successful in obtaining them, it would be a matter of the greatest difficulty to catch them or to shake them off, and the destruction they might do may be conjectured.

This danger from escaped cruisers or swift, armed merchant-vessels constitutes one of the two principal menaces which, if ever we are engaged in war with a great naval Power, our navy will have to be prepared to meet. It would lie within the power of such vessels to continue their depredations for weeks or even months, for they would probably possess the highest speed, and would be enabled to carry a very large supply of coal. As fighting would be, where possible, avoided, the armament carried would probably be light. A few comparatively feeble guns would make a vessel formidable to merchant-shipping, and the fewer shells carried, the more room there would be for coal. Raiding and evasion would be the tactics of these vessels, and their chief efficiency would lie in their speed. What precise policy our sailors would adopt to deal with them, it is not necessary for us to inquire. Presumably, we should patrol and watch the routes followed by our trading vessels with cruisers sufficiently strong to cope with any single ships or

small squadrons which they might encounter, and as nearly equal to the enemy as regards speed and sea-worthiness and coal capacity as they could be made to be. But for such a policy to be effective, since the pace of a squadron is only that of the slowest ship, all our cruisers would have to be equal both in speed and power to the swiftest and strongest one of the enemy. It is evident that, if we are to act as is suggested, an enormous addition to our cruisers will be necessitated. Moreover, our cruisers would be so scattered over the globe that they could not be easily concentrated for any other purpose. According to the view of Captain Ballard, R.N., some 300 first-class cruisers would have to devote themselves to the gigantic task.

A method more in accordance with the precepts of strategy would be to seek out the main forces of the enemy where we suspect they are, and render them impotent for mischief either by bringing them to battle or by compelling them to take shelter and avoid it. Touch once established, every effort to retain it should be made. Even single ships should be accounted for and shadowed. Such a system of dealing with commerce-destroying brings us back to blockade, a measure that we have already discussed. It is no doubt the best means of meeting the difficulty, but, as has been shown, we cannot expect it to be perfect.

How far towards perfection it could be brought would vary according to the ports or seas to be blockaded and to the enemy against which it was directed. A methodical study of the ships to be encountered in every imaginable contingency could be prepared, and the relative strength and qualifications of the opposing forces weighed. The actual scheme would depend on these, and would vary with them.

But there remains, and probably always will remain,

a danger which a blockade could not be expected to provide against.

In the Channel and narrow seas, where our trade routes run close to the coasts or strongholds of potential enemies, hostile torpedo boats and small craft might dash out from such shelter on the flanks of the courses of our ships, and such raiders might in a few hours accomplish a great deal of mischief, and return again to port. If it is as possible as it is believed for a comparatively large vessel to emerge undetected from a closely-watched harbour, the task of getting out and going in again at night should not be beyond the powers of so small and fast a craft as a torpedo boat. But to attempt the feat in daylight would probably offer so small a chance of success that it would not even be attempted. If the period of danger for merchant-shipping were limited to the hours of darkness, a vast impediment would be put in the way of their destruction. Because extinction and not capture would, of course, be the only object of the enemy. To discharge a torpedo would give little clue as to the boat's whereabouts, and would be a decisive means of destruction. If our mercantile ships did not attempt to pass certain dangerous stretches of coast-line by night risk of destruction would be reduced to a small minimum, while the delay in some secure anchorage till the following dawn would often not amount to more than the waste of some hours. In other localities a detour in the course usually followed would supply equal security, for the small craft could not venture far from their harbours lest daylight should overtake them before they could return.

In commercial transactions, however, time is an important factor, and our shipowners might in some cases feel the pressure of the delay incidental to the

policy just described so severely, that an endeavour to secure their passage through the most dangerous waters, even at night, would have to be made. A system of patrolling the threatened routes in addition to the blockading of the hostile ports would have to be undertaken, so that, no matter what policy we adopted, the demands on the services of cruisers would be very high.

On the other hand, we must not forget that night operations would be attended with great difficulty for the enemy, and that even when he had succeeded in securing his own safety, he would by no means have overcome all the obstacles in his way. It would not be easy to distinguish between the ships of belligerents and neutrals in the dark, and any mistake where such drastic methods of injuring commerce as torpedoing and sending to the bottom merchant-vessels and civilian crews were adopted might provoke something more than mere remonstrance from any but very weak neutral powers. While it was only our ships and people that were thus ruthlessly sunk, the voice of humanity might possibly be stifled by gratified spite or self-interest, but a neutral would not long tolerate a system of tactics which every now and then involved a ship or two of his in the barbarous havoc. Neutral goods on board a vessel captured and towed into port may be respected when the division of the spoils takes place, and neutrals will look complacently on while the commerce of a rival is destroyed. But torpedo boats could not seize and carry off vessels under the conditions we are considering, and the risk of immolating friend and foe in the general ruin would be considerable. The reckless and ruthless adventurer might do immense injury to our trade, skill and courage might carry him on for long, but it is not unlikely that while he escaped our cruisers, he might

involve those he served in international complications sufficiently serious to effectually curb his indiscriminating zeal. It is even possible that so much friction with neutrals might be developed by such a system of nightly raiding that it would have to be abandoned altogether in many regions. Thus the quarrelling of our neighbours might temper the wind to the lamb before ever it was shorn.

Those who point to the effect on our commerce of the great war with France at the beginning of the last century, and to the lessons of the past, are certainly justified in their attitude of hope. It was the commerce of our enemies, not that of our own people, that was destroyed. We lost some 11,000 merchantmen, but at the end of the struggle not only was our military navy supreme but we had gained what was practically the carrying trade of the whole world. If we lost a tonnage of 1,375,000 in those twenty-one years it was only a loss of about 2½ per cent.* While the continental system almost ruined us, it was the engine that brought about the complete downfall of its inventor.

Yet must we note that the conditions under which warfare was carried on by us a hundred years ago were very different from those which now obtain. We were still able to produce almost all the food our people required; we did not import foreign meat at all; and although the importation of foreign wheat had begun it had as yet only attained small dimensions. At that period the Royal Navy of Great Britain was more than equal to the accumulated warships of the whole remainder of the world. In those days the Reform Bill had not been passed, and political power was in the hands of an aristocracy, never wanting in patriotism, and more likely to be unaffected by sudden

* Captain Mahan's "Influence of Sea-power on the French Revolution and on History," Vol. ii. pp. 225, 226.

reverses of fortune than an assembly depending on the votes and reflecting the weakness and instability of those who largely live from hand to mouth. However false politically the situation may have been, the fact that the governing class was the one least affected by the hardships and pressure of war was a safeguard against panic and an assurance of a steadfast prosecution of our purpose.

There was also this further difference in the situation, that whereas the remainder of the nations had no shipping capable of assuming the functions of our carrying trade, and it could not therefore be alienated from us, merchant-shipping has sprung up since in every direction, and in many a dockyard out of England a first-class liner can be built.

We have now to compete with others in every market and in the production of every commodity. We have no longer a monopoly of excellence, no longer do we command markets or control rates. Amidst the struggle for existence profits dwindle. There is a smaller margin to go upon; it takes less to upset the equilibrium.

When the margin of profit is so small, would not the heavy rates of insurance that war must bring eat up the scanty remnant, and leave nothing on which trade can live? We know that the Government of this country is never likely to undertake State contribution to the cost of insurance of vessels in time of war. Yet the rates we may expect to see will be almost prohibitive, especially at first. We cannot obtain complete command of the sea all in a moment; there must be a period of suspense; some minor disasters are probably inevitable; the capture of a great liner would resound throughout our harbours, premiums might, some say almost certainly would, rise as high as 10 per cent.

It has been the custom in many quarters to draw

the most gloomy inferences from the results of the depredations of the *Alabama*, *Sumter*, and other vessels that forty years ago preyed upon the commerce of the Federals in their great struggle with the Southern States. Although the Northerners enjoyed an undoubted supremacy at sea their commerce was obliged to seek the shelter of our flag, and became permanently absorbed in the great volume which we already possessed. It has been shown, however, that other causes besides the fear of hostile cruisers were at work. Twelve years ago, in the *United Service Magazine*, Sir George Clarke pointed out the fallacy that underlay the arguments of those who looked rather to effects than to causes, and last summer a correspondent of the *Shipping Gazette** supplied some very valuable information on the point.

According to his view, the United States shipping was declining before the war began, and the depredations of the *Alabama* and her consorts only gave the *coup de grace* to a structure which was already tottering. The defection of the coast states in the Southern Confederacy likewise caused a diminution which has not always been accounted for. The number and tonnage of the United States mercantile-marine as it existed before the war was very considerably reduced by this cause alone. But economic causes were at work also. The "west" was still undeveloped, and offered a better investment for money than did shipping. America was using her accumulated capital in improving and fostering the enormous resources of her territory. The work of transporting by sea the produce obtained, and the process by which commodities were brought from other countries in exchange were left to Great Britain, because it *paid* to let them go. The transaction was, in fact, a commercial one, conducted on business

* *Shipping Gazette and Lloyd's List*, 19th August 1902.

principles, and aiming at financial advantage. And by a fortuitous combination of circumstances it happened that British shipowners were at the moment able to absorb without inconvenience what fell away from the United States.

The amount that America lost during the war was 1,229,035 tons, of which a very large proportion went to us. But the point for us to bear in mind is that the transfer was not primarily due to the devastation caused by the Confederate cruisers. Neither even had it been so, should any argument as to what would occur to us, were we at war with an inferior sea-power, be built upon it. The disposal of our carrying trade would be a widely different thing to what it was in the other case, because there would be no Power able to take it up as we were able to do when the far smaller volume of the United States tonnage was ready for absorption.

But since the great French war, and even since the American struggle of forty years ago, two great changes have made their influence felt, and new factors not involved in the problem of a hundred years ago at all, and only partially in that of the early sixties, are introduced into the question. The invention of steamships has certainly favoured the protection of commerce, and the improvement in telegraphic communications has facilitated the shadowing of hostile cruisers. The depredations of the *Alabama* and her class were committed amongst sailing-vessels, and at the earlier period the difficulty of protecting ships even when near at hand was very great, because the protecting cruisers were dependent on wind and sails alone.

But the introduction of steam navigation has had effects far beyond the mere tactical advantages to be derived from it. Coal supply is complementary to the efficiency of the most modern cruiser,—as essential

as is food and forage to an armed force on shore, and as surely does it influence mobility. Foreign Powers are restricted in their activity by the inexorable demands of fuel. They have few coaling-stations in the seas distant from Europe, and some that they have are not by any means well secured. The raiding cruisers would be driven to other expedients and to other sources of supply than those our vessels could utilise. Coal-ships would have to keep in touch with them, or they would be compelled to raid neutral ports, or live on what they could take from the bunkers of their prizes. Neutral steamers might perhaps be chartered to meet them at prearranged ports, or at sea. Such arrangements would, however, have to be made in secrecy to prevent our discovering what was intended, and would not very easily be carried through during a time of war. Coaling at sea is not always an easy task, and the risk of the operation being disturbed would be considerable. The cruisers that were compelled to fall back on such measures would have to seek remote and lonely seas such as are only to be found away from the trade routes, where their spheres of activity would lie. They would have to leave the very places where it was most necessary for them to be, and that, too, often at a critical moment; so that the possession of our numerous coaling-stations is an immense aid to any of our war-ships that undertake the protection of our mercantile-marine. Coal is a factor in the problem of the first importance, and it is one which undoubtedly is very much in our favour.

The preservation of our lines of communication from home to our various bases, and their connection with one another, forms, then, the primary effort of a supreme navy, and, as I have in another chapter shown, the keeping the great waterways open to our ships its first care. The ultimate fate of our mercantile-marine

while our navy is strong enough to carry out this duty is secure. But the power to perform this task is not to be attained by anything short of supremacy at sea. The nation that can hold the seas against its opponents will survive the loss of a proportion of its merchantmen, and will injure the commerce of its opponents more than it suffers itself. If it were a great commercial nation before the war, a triumphant issue to the war is not likely to make it less prosperous.

That there will be sacrifices to be faced is certain, for the most invincible sea-power cannot secure absolute immunity from loss. Unfortunately, too, we must expect that in our highly artificial society losses will press most heavily on our poor, and cause distress from which it is the duty of every Government as far as possible to shield its people. It is for this reason that we must look beyond the possession of a predominant navy or one that is manifestly so strong as to deserve that title. And, moreover, we must so economise our strength that as much of it as possible may be available for the great actions that we trust will quickly win the war for us. That we must not only win but win quickly and decisively has been already explained, and therefore we must take away as few ships as possible from the concentrated fleets.

It is not only a question of initial expense. The addition of a very large number of cruisers would raise difficulties as to crews also, and their annual upkeep would weigh heavily too upon our naval estimates. Moreover, the armaments of foreign Governments have to be kept pace with.

It is evident that although the Declaration of Paris may assert that "privateering is, and remains abolished," it will again some day appear under another name. A stroke of the pen can convert a merchant-vessel into a Government one, and she may prey on

commerce again, only with the difference that she will have to hand over to her Government what she captures. The cormorant does the same amount of damage to a fishery whether he is allowed to swallow or is made to disgorge the fish.

A demand that certain of our merchant-ships should be subsidised in peace time by Government has accordingly been raised amongst those interested in our commerce. And the demand has for some time been recognised as a just one by our Admiralty, which does pay subsidies to certain owners, in order that it may have the right to take up some of their ships at a moment's notice. The conditions stipulate that the ships are to be so built that they may be able to carry the armament that is allotted to them, but kept in store till needed. The arrangement of their bunkers is also to be such that some protection may be afforded to their vital parts. Lists of vessels which fulfil certain conditions as to speed and internal arrangements such as would make them valuable for national use in war are kept. But it is represented that these subventions have not gone far enough, and have not been sufficient to induce owners to do all that is necessary. They were not sufficient, for example, to induce owners to build vessels of exceptional speed or of a quality that would make them fit to carry armament.

It will probably not be contested that the English mercantile-marine not many years ago enjoyed a pre-eminence and prestige beyond what mere numbers bestow. We not only had the fastest ships in the world, but almost all the great ocean-going vessels of really considerable speed belonged to us. To-day it is thus. Messrs Harland & Wolff some two years ago launched the *Celtic*, and last August added the *Cedric*, her somewhat larger successor, and the biggest ocean liner in the world, to our mercantile

fleets. Almost simultaneously, however, the *Kaiser Wilhelm II.* was floated out to damp our exultation, and, although 1000 tons smaller, is still the fastest boat. In truth, we cannot to-day boast of the fastest ship in the world, or of the second fastest, or even of the third fastest. Indeed, of twenty-two ocean steamers capable of doing 20 knots or upwards, only nine fly the British flag.

What speed may mean in commerce-protection we have seen, and the loss of our supremacy in respect of it is not only a matter for regret on sentimental, but furnishes ground for apprehension on commercial, grounds. The advantage which the foreigner has gained upon us is not due to his superior skill and industry but to the encouragement in the way of subsidies he has received from Governments which have been studying the question from the military standpoint, and have prepared in peace for the possibilities of war. As I have shown, to encourage or mould private enterprise to the purpose of the State has never been a feature of our policy. Our most cherished ideas of political economy have been bitterly opposed to any system of bounties or artificial forcing of trade developments. And thus it has come about that, although Sir Nathaniel Barnaby, Admiral Sir Frederick Gray, and Sir Spencer Robinson, then Controller of the Navy, all gave their support to the movement in favour of establishing a system of auxiliary cruisers to aid in the protection of our commerce, the essential qualifications of speed were overlooked. Our naval authorities recognised that there were British vessels which could easily be converted into cruisers, but money, as has often happened, barred the way towards success. The late Lord Inverclyde proposed that subsidised steamers should be built to meet certain requirements, and that they should be manned by

seamen of the Royal Naval Reserve, who should be trained in gunnery at the respective home ports of the companies or owners. Sir Donald Currie read a paper at the Royal United Service Institution, pointing to the progress that was going on abroad, and submitted a scheme for the retention of swift merchant-cruisers by means of an annual subsidy.* The views of the French Admiral Fournier may also be quoted in support of those of the formal naval advisers of our Admiralty and of our own great shipowners. He has said in *La Flotte Necessaire*:

"As types of fast cruisers for the destruction of commerce I know of nothing which more fully meets the requirements than those magnificent Transatlantic steamships, the *Lucania* and *Campania*, capable of maintaining a speed of 22 knots an hour with extraordinary uniformity. The *New York*, *Paris*, *St Louis*, and *St Paul*, with the English ships *Majestic* and *Teutonic*, possess the same qualities, though in a somewhat less degree of perfection. Such ships will, in my view, be the destroyers of commerce in the future." Lord Brassey has lent his powerful advocacy to the same cause, and has supplied some figures which place our altered position with startling lucidity before us.

The *Deutschland* and *Kaiser Wilhelm*, of 14,000 and 15,000 tons respectively, exceed in speed by nearly two knots our best ships. No vessel now building for the British flag will rival in speed the *Kaiser Wilhelm II.* and *Kronprinz Wilhelm* now † under construction.

And a table is given which shows that, taking vessels above 3000 tons only, the relative position is as follows:—

* "Merchant Auxiliaries," by the Right Honourable Lord Brassey, K.C.B.

† 1901.

| | British | Foreign |
|---|---|---|
| 20 knots and over . . . | 6 | 6 |
| 19 to 20 knots . . . . | 1 | 11 |
| 18 to 19 knots . . . . | 9 | 4 |
| 17 to 18 knots . . . . | 22 | 18 |
| 16 to 17 knots . . . . | 17 | 18 |
| Total | 55 | 57 |

The latest returns of ships, of all countries, over 3000 tons, having a speed of 18 knots and over, are equally surprising; while, although we own about half the aggregate tonnage of the merchant-shipping of the world, less than half of the 157 ships of 16 knots and over fly our flag.

The policy of binding our finest vessels to the service of the State as mercantile auxiliaries is to be recommended also on the grounds that otherwise they may fall into the hands of other countries. Lord Brassey quotes the late Mr Ismay as saying in his evidence before the Royal Commission on coaling-stations: "When a company has not been doing well, and has got heavy bills running which it cannot meet, the temptation to shut its eyes to what would be the ultimate destination of ships sold to foreigners in a crisis would be very great. At the commencement of the Russian scare on the occasion of the Peuj-deh incident, great temptations were offered to the owners of the White Star steamers running between San Francisco and Japan; and it is not too much to say that our whole commerce in the Pacific would have been transferred to the flag of the United States if that offer had been accepted." According to Lord Brassey, the remedy must be sought in the building for the future of mercantile auxiliaries specially designed for conversion into cruisers. Shipowners about to build large

and swift merchant-vessels should be invited to submit their plans to the Admiralty, and the cost of any alterations which they might be willing to make in order to adapt their vessels for the emergencies of war should be met by a grant from Government. Liberal subsidies would be demanded, but a fleet would grow up capable of supplementing the efforts of warships, not only in protecting our commerce, but useful as scouts and patrol vessels and auxiliaries in general to a fleet.

Both manœuvres and recent war have shown of what value merchant-cruisers may become. In 1885 Admiral Hornby bore eloquent testimony to the good service rendered by the *Oregon*, a slow ship measured by our most modern standard, but at that time owing her efficiency to her relative speed.

During the Spanish-American war the *New York*, a merchant-vessel, flew the flag of Admiral Sampson, the United States Commander-in-Chief,—a high compliment for an auxiliary to receive, and one significant as to the importance attached to such vessels by men actually engaged on active service. The coal endurance and continuous high speed of a modern mail steamer give her, in fact, a remarkable advantage over warships, and would render her of the greatest assistance to us, but at the same time a weapon which might in hostile hands be turned against our commerce with equal effect.

Quite recently the proceedings of the Shipping Combine have awakened public attention, not only to the existence of these portentous ships, but to the fact that they can change their flag with bewildering ease, and may one day be steered by friends and the next by enemies.

A new element of variety has been added to the forces of the sea, and our Government have just taken

fresh steps to meet it. Bearing all the facts that have just been stated in mind, they have entered on an agreement with a great shipping company, which will enable them in time of war to command the services of auxiliary cruisers after the manner which has been foreshadowed.

Let not anyone imagine that this question of commerce-protection is entirely a naval one, and that it does not, therefore, enter into the general question of Imperial defence at all: that we can leave it on one side as a highly technical and difficult portion of the subject which may be relegated to experts to decide upon.

No view of Imperial defence which forgets the commercial basis of the Empire, or ignores the protection of those ships that bring raw material and food to our work-people, could be considered satisfactory, and no penetration into that field can be regarded as a trespass.

Besides the other considerations which a liberal view of the subject will suggest, that one which reminds us what calls the army alone in times of war makes on our mercantile-marine cannot be left out of sight. Transports for men and horses, despatch vessels, cable ships, hospital ships, all these may be found amongst the adjuncts of an expedition over-sea. The efficiency of our mercantile-marine is distinctly a matter of personal interest to the army, independently of its bearing on Imperial defence, in which, as I have shown, both services are closely bound together.

And if the army can bear but a very small share relatively to that of the navy in protecting our commerce, what it does do is not by any means to be despised. Coaling-stations and harbours of refuge for our merchantmen to seek are held by the army.

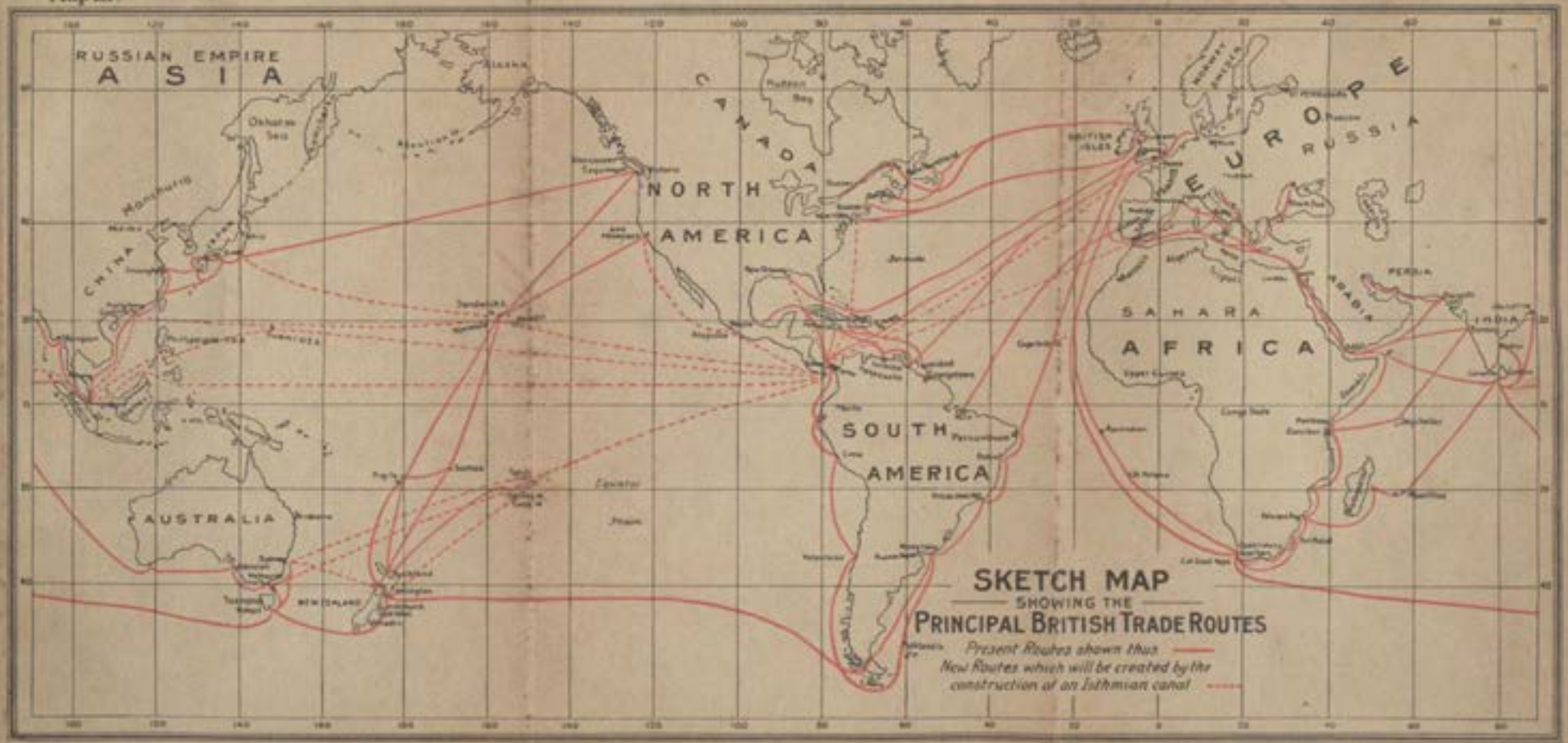
Bases from which our cruisers and armed auxiliaries can operate, and, last but not least, strongholds into which hostile prizes may be towed and prisoners-of-war detained must be secured by the army. One of the advantages a great sea-Power with naval bases and fortified harbours scattered all over the globe can boast of is, that she can readily dispose of the prizes her cruisers seize. A Power not so well supplied would often be in difficulties as to how to get rid of its booty. Prisoners would frequently be a very considerable difficulty; the goods of neutrals even a more troublesome embarrassment. Without having been called upon to face the responsibility, men may talk lightly of torpedoing vessels, obliterating crews and ships and cargoes from the face of the waters. Barbarism would be a light word to characterise so callous a disregard of human life, recklessness but a faint stigma on a policy so certain to vex strong neutrals and provoke reprisals.

The army that secures harbours for its country, and denies them to the enemy, will be of no insignificant aid even in so wholly maritime an operation as the protection of commerce.

But the fact of our bases and ports all over the world being held secure will aid shipowners in another way. The existence of sanctuaries such as Hong-Kong or Bombay is not only of material assistance but of moral support. They help to reassure public opinion, and tend to keep rates of insurance down. Any alleviation of the pressure, the enhanced rates war must necessarily bring with it, will be very welcome to owners already in many cases struggling for existence in the fierce competition that has narrowed their margins of profit in times of peace. Every aid and every effort that makes for stability and confidence is of value, every ton saved from a neutral flag is a gain; and here

again the army finds its duties and its sphere of action, and while it makes our great business centres in outlying parts of the Empire impregnable, staves off panic and all its attendant dangers from our people at home.

Map III.

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## CHAPTER X

### THE DEFENCE OF OUR GREAT DEPENDENCIES AND OF THE OUTLYING PORTIONS OF OUR EMPIRE

IN a book which deals only with principles of Imperial defence, any analysis of the schemes for the defence of the North-West frontier of India, or detailed suggestions as to modification of them, would be out of place. But even if this were not so, I should certainly not enter on the subject here. It must always, of course, engage much of our attention. Probably no great problem of the kind has been more closely examined, but it is not a matter for me to discuss in public, and there is, moreover, no need to do so, except in so far as to show how all the forces of the Empire can be employed upon it. The same remarks apply with even greater force to the question of the defence of Canada. I will therefore say but very little on the subject, nor will I give any hint as to what views I may hold upon it.

The case of the Commonwealth and New Zealand is a somewhat different one. They stand or fall with the predominance of our navy, and their defence, illustrating as it does the virtue of sea-power, has already been referred to incidentally. Questions of local defence manifestly lie altogether beyond the scope of these pages, and, as regards the broader question, there is really very little to be said.

While our navy is supreme the great islands of

the Antipodes are invulnerable. They can only be reached by water, and the Power that controls the waterways of the world assures their safety, though their inhabitants may never see a ship.

South Africa offers a different kind of problem. As against other nations, her safety is assured by the same sea-power that secures our Australasian Colonies. As regards internal danger, the statesman and not the soldier must ensure the stability of our rule. South Africa's most dangerous enemy at present is herself. From the chaos of war a united people will, we hope, emerge—a people interested in preserving our Government for its own sake, because it is more liberal, more just, more beneficent than any other. The native difficulty, and the defence of the Colonies against attack on shore, is, or will be, a question of local policy, and is, moreover, one on which instincts of self-preservation should unite every race and every faction.

No principles of Imperial defence that need explanation or analysis will be involved in this question, difficult and pressing as it may become. For the present it is in the hands of those on the spot, and it too will be here passed by.

But while all questions which have been and are dealt with by authorities whose special duties lead them to the task, will be left severely alone by me; and while it is not desired to discuss possibilities which are more fitly and freely dealt with behind closed doors, some of the larger strategical features of problems which are openly discussed in lecture halls and newspapers and books of travel, can scarcely be ignored by me. A few words, then, as to the nature of the task which the defence of India, or of our interests in the Far East, will impose on our armed forces may be allowed me, more especially as in

their consideration are involved many questions which bear directly on the nature and extent of the duties which our regular army must be prepared to undertake. Whatever the precise line of defence taken up on our Indian frontier may be, the estimate as to the reinforcements that will be called for from England will vary but little. Whatever form the strategical plan decided upon may assume, the considerations as to what garrison must be left behind in India will still hold good. We will pass by, then, for the moment, the various advantages and disadvantages that mark the several courses open to us, and we will proceed at once to the conclusion which in the end we are certain to arrive at, namely, that an outbreak of a great war on the Indian frontier will call for reinforcements from England amounting to some 50,000 men and 180 guns. When allowance is made for men medically unfit, or too young to go abroad, such an estimate practically means that two Army Corps would be absorbed in the defence of India. But drafts to our forces in that country, the making good of the wastage caused by wounds and sickness in the field, the reinforcement of our garrisons in certain other parts of the world, and the thousand unlooked-for calls that a great war makes on the manhood of a country, would start further drains upon us. The Far and Middle East would become involved too, and we have contracted obligations in the latter. The equivalent of a third Army Corps would soon be eaten into. No one who has worked out the problem, taking into account the cardinal principles that govern our Indian arrangements, will assert that such a forecast as has here been made is anything but a moderate one. It certainly is not put forward in any alarmist or pessimistic spirit; it is quoted to give those who doubt whether the present establishments of our army are

really necessary some idea of what no very remote contingency might demand from it.

There is, to be sure, an alternative policy, one not in favour amongst the soldiers who have most deeply studied the question; and one, indeed, less heard of now than it used to be some years back: the policy, namely, that recommends us to accept what we are told is inevitable—that is to say, the disappearance of a buffer state, and our acquiescence in a frontier along the line of watershed formed by the Hindu Kush and Hazara mountains, where we should be in touch with a European Power. Now, whatever merits or demerits may cling round such a frontier, one of its effects would manifestly be that we should, once for all, find ourselves in the position of a European country, with our territory marching with the possessions of another potentially hostile race of white men. It would mean that a permanent addition, to be reckoned at two Army Corps, would have to be made to the garrison of India. Further, one of those Army Corps would have to be composed of British troops. In other words, our home army establishments would have to be still further increased to enable them to feed the new addition to our forces stationed in India, while the burden on the Indian exchequer would be augmented by the sum required for the upkeep of two more Army Corps. Leaving out of sight, therefore, the military aspects of such a proposal, we see that there are grave financial difficulties in the way,—difficulties sufficiently great as to shake the faith of any who may imagine that responsibilities can be disposed of by evading them, or that graceful concession is necessarily economical.

We shall never, it is to be hoped, adopt a policy which would involve the breaking of our faith as a nation, and we may pass these suggestions by as alike immoral, impolitic, and impracticable.

To pass from the particular to the general :—

The greatest obstacle in our way when we deal with such problems as the defence of a great frontier, is not so much to formulate a plan, as to make provision that it shall ever be completely adopted or consistently adhered to. The intellectual effort involved in conceiving a sound strategic scheme, or in correctly appreciating one that is laid before you, is by no means one beyond the powers of an average brain. Perhaps it is for this reason that many imagine that there is little to be learned in war, that a man may succeed in it by the light of nature and step at once into leadership without further equipment than what we call common-sense, a quality which, we may note, is about as difficult to find in men as genius itself. The real difficulties begin after the situation has been reviewed, the maps marked, and the armies mobilised. The entanglements of politics, unforeseen characteristics of the regions to be traversed, want of transport, and the thousand other cares of a general, then suddenly burst into vigorous life, and choke the first promise of the most enterprising mind. The purpose becomes lost in the litter of detail. Opinions and advice and suggestions are poured, with all the confidence of irresponsibility, into ears grown weary under storm and stress. A man must often be more prepared to parry the objections and modifications that are put forward by his friends than the manœuvres of the foe. Not seldom the main difficulty that he has to grapple with is not so much to devise as to carry out a scheme, not so much to make up his mind, as to keep to his decision.

It is for this reason that a careful study of possible contingencies, during times of peace, gives readiness and decision when war suddenly comes upon us. If the salient features of every aspect of a question have been rendered completely familiar a kind of ballast

to meet the sudden gusts of popular clamour or unwarrantable alarm, invaluable in times of stress, has been provided.

And, apart from any concrete references, what do great operations from distant bases hinge upon? On facilities for transport of warlike stores, ammunition, reinforcements from the main centres of life and activity in the country to the army in contact with the enemy far away. The limb that is best nourished remains eventually the strongest; the tree whose roots reach the river flourishes with a more luxuriant growth than its fellow that is watered by a precarious rainfall.

Communications, always the most important factor in warfare, assume decisive importance when the contest is waged at extreme distances that stretch from one continent to another. The long line of the French communications in the Peninsula was the canker that lay at the root of their efficiency. Those weary miles of roadway—a dreary vision of ruts and mud—stretching back from Cadiz and Valencia and Madrid, must have shaken many a daring resolution. Back from divisions scattered all over Spain ran the smaller channels into the great artery that led by Burgos and Bayonne to fertile and populous France. Those long-drawn stages of slowly-moving waggons were not the least opponents that Napoleon's marshals had to overcome. Guerillas and partisans and a hostile population on the one hand, and the sea-power which allowed Wellington to continually change his base and shorten his channels of supply on the other, were enough to more than counterbalance disparity in numbers or quality of troops. Russia, at the Crimean epoch, only half-developed and unable to use her strength, is eventually brought to her knees by the persistent pressure which better communications enabled the Allies to exert. In 1877 a similar spectacle is re-

vealed. A huge army, fed by a single line of rail, and with indifferent roads behind it, arrives at length before Constantinople reeling and exhausted. That change of gauge in the railway line at Oungheni was, alone, worth an Army Corps to the Turks. The deep alluvial soil of the Danube valley cost Russia more than the losses she incurred when the river itself was forced. And modern armies need more to keep them efficient than was the case in former days. There are, to begin with, more mouths to be fed, because more men can be put in the field in these days of universal service and facilities for mobilising and concentrating troops. More ammunition is also used because ranges are longer, battles are more protracted, and the process of discharging and loading firearms has grown more rapid. The standard of comfort and humanity is higher also; there is not only more food to be carried, but more medical comforts are needed; there are more wounded men to be attended to; perhaps a large number of prisoners to be fed. Any modern war, therefore, in which two nations may engage, many hundreds or thousands of miles from their capitals, will hinge on excellence of communications. The centres of the national life will probably be unassailable, and no attempt to reach them will be made. The end will come as the result of a slow depletion of strength, the life-blood will trickle drop by drop from an opened vein, not gush forth as when a great artery or the heart itself is rent asunder. No Austerlitz will herald the immediate occupation of a capital, no Gravelotte prepare the way for the stupendous military and political downfall of a Sedan.

When European nations fight out their differences in the Far East, or in the confines of Central Asia, they will enter on a war of communications, and success will crown the efforts of those who will be able to

last the longest because they are supplied the best. No tremendous tactical catastrophes are to be expected, no sudden strategical surprises are likely to be seen, the issues will be decided more prosaically and probably more slowly, but perhaps for that very reason more decisively and more permanently.

From the nature of the cases that may occur, it will also follow that water communications will, to a large extent, be pitted against those that run by land.

It is for this reason that the efficiency of our mercantile-marine is a matter vitally affecting our schemes of Imperial defence, even when viewed from the army point of view alone. A war in India would demand the immediate embarkation and rapid despatch of reinforcements. Immediate is, however, here but a relative term, and must be taken in a sense to be qualified by the naval situation of the moment. The carrying capacity and speed of steamers will be set in competition against that of railway trucks and locomotives. Whatever strategical scheme be adopted, these capabilities must be the prominent factors in it, and the decision arrived at must bear the impress of naval as well as of army thought and influence.

But water transport will take an army no farther than the shore or banks of a great river. Before animals and waggons have to be pressed into our service, there is often a great gap where the assistance of a railway will be of incalculable value, and the nearer the railhead can be pushed to the fighting-line the more free and certain the flow of stores and supplies. The provision, therefore, of strategical lines of railway as a means of improving communications becomes a duty which no sea-Power, however great and however much it can count upon the assistance of a mercantile-marine, can afford to shirk. During future conflicts in remote regions, water communica-

tions will certainly be pitted against land communications, yet a stage will inevitably be reached when the water transport will have to be supplemented by railways. Further, the insidious advance that characterises a line of rail is difficult to combat. A railway stands for civilisation; it creeps on to confer commercial benefits; it may be shown to have a philanthropic mission, and in the mildest mannered way annexes territory and dominates cities with a quiet ease that a freebooter might envy. If commerce was the foundation of our Empire, it is also perhaps the most dangerous foe it has at present to contend with. There appears but one feasible counter-policy, but one antidote, save the drastic one of war. Aggression by railway must be met by obstruction by railway; and lines of rail which will improve our political and commercial position in peace time, and which will have an additional value in war, must be planned.

And many of the necessary railways are already marked out. For example, from Dera Ismael Khan along the Gomal Pass and Thob Valley to Quetta runs the chief trade route from Afghanistan to India. A railway line would improve the commercial value of that route, and would help us to secure the friendship of the Pathans. Should, moreover, the occupation by us of Ghuznee ever become necessary, that operation would be greatly facilitated by it. Again, a railway from Peshawur to Kabul would certainly bring with it strategical advantages, and might be expected to consolidate and strengthen our relationship with the Ameer. The extension of our railways to Kandahar would be no less desirable on strategical grounds, but the idea was distasteful to the late Ameer, and could not therefore be carried out.

Further, a railway from the coast of Biluchistan to Seistan could not but strengthen our strategical

position, and would ultimately be connected with our Quetta - Chaman line through Nushki, whither an extension of the latter has just lately been carried.

Light frontier railways are likewise needed to open up and secure the Trans-Indus region that from Peshawur to Sind has not as yet derived any of the benefits that railway communication brings with it. But that only financial considerations bar the way to wide developments here, there is probably little doubt: and there is little chance of our interests being overlooked.

As regards Canada and the defence of its frontier, I do not propose to say anything here. It is not possible for me to publicly discuss the question, and the matter is essentially one to be left to those whose duty it is to formulate proposals. The problems connected with the defence of a frontier 4000 miles in length will be found of absorbing interest by those who desire to take them up; but meanwhile we may hope that we may never have to face them, for a war with our kith and kin is a remote contingency, and can never be viewed by us with anything but abhorrence.

It has, however, been pointed out in Canada herself, that British Colombia may be exposed to attack from a European Power, and that a consideration of Canadian defence should not be confined to the danger of an attack on her from the south alone. A question of lines of communication is raised again here. Our communications to the western coasts of Canada run first by water and then by rail. Those of a great European Power to the same spot would run first by rail and then by water. The results of a great struggle would again turn on the relative excellence of those two long lines of supply. For at present we should have to bear the brunt of the

fight, because the forces of the Dominion are as yet inadequate to her position. But it is satisfactory to note that we have no cause for anxiety here. No Power could venture to assail the western shore of Canada until the supremacy of her sea-power in the Pacific had first been made secure, and especially in the face of our recent alliance with the sea-Power of the Far East, such supremacy will have to be won by some hard fighting.

Colonial thought in Canada has, however, shown lately that a feeling is making itself recognised throughout the Dominion that the time is approaching when the defence of the Atlantic seaboard also should be taken into her own hands. Sydney and St John are places rising daily to the importance which claims special defence. At present the pressure of armaments per head of the population is in Canada smaller than that in the case of any other nation. There is then a wide margin for increased effort, and the future will doubtless see a different state of things. Perhaps, some day, a great base, capable of equipping and maintaining Imperial fleets, may grow up at Halifax, and the enemy when he has cut communication with England may find he has still to reckon with what the Colonies can do.

# CHAPTER XI

## HOME DEFENCE

By many it may be thought that a book on Imperial defence should commence with a chapter on how our homes are to be rendered secure. A man defending himself either with weapon or armour will instinctively protect his head before his legs, and will keep his vitals covered at all hazards. Before a nation thinks of retaining her colonies, it is to be supposed that she will have made her hearths and altars impregnable. Home defence is the first postulate of Imperial defence, and must be provided for before we even begin to consider the larger subject.

All this is true, and to those who have followed me through the previous chapter it is clear, I trust, that the fact has not been overlooked by me. The supreme navy has been the keynote throughout; and, within certain limitations, while we can count upon a navy supreme and invincible, the security of our homes is assured. If we were absolutely and entirely convinced that our navy were supreme, and would always remain so, the question of an invasion would very properly become a matter no longer within the realm of practical politics, and we might without rashness or over-confidence occupy our minds with projects of an offensive character, and consider only the possibility of ending a grievous war by carrying an army into hostile territory and forcing on peace.

In view of what our navy has done for us in the

past, it is possible for us without any arrogance of spirit to meet with steadfast faces the storms that may await us in the future, and so far I have allowed the confidence of the country to be reflected in what I have here said, and have let myself enjoy a share in the feelings of patriotism that face what is coming in the temper of exultation rather than of anxiety. When the land forces of the country are taking up positions to cover London, the barometer of our fortunes will have fallen low indeed. We shall have been driven to our last resort; and shall have been forced to stand at bay for the first time since the days of the Conqueror. However gloomy the views as to our military efficiency which may prevail, there is so far no need to place such a national situation in the forefront of discussion. It has seemed more proper to relegate home defence to a less prominent position.

While, however, the confidence which may animate us is neither unworthy or ill-founded, it is well that when home defence is discussed the facts of the situation should be carefully analysed, and any peculiarities which our circumstances exhibit in these latter days conscientiously noted. For truly our position is unique. Animosity rears itself against us on every side. We have gone to the ends of the earth to find an ally. Rome, our great prototype, struggled in her latter days against the pressure of barbarians. Her strength ebbed away during a contest in which civilisation was pitted against the rapacity and unrest of warlike but semi-savage foes. It is not hordes of naked barbarians that will overwhelm us but the surplus product of civilised races forced to expand by the same necessities which drove our people to seek new outlets and means of livelihood. Our course in the eyes of some has been specially directed by Providence. There are those who see in us a chosen people and a

race predestined to enjoy the fruits of the earth. The ideas thus suggested to our minds are flattering to our vanity and soothing to our pride. Success is most delightful when it is possible to persuade oneself that it is the product of merit rather than of good fortune. But it is not reasonable to expect that less fortunate competitors should be as well satisfied with the results as we are, should be appreciative and sympathetic in place of jealous and disappointed.

It may be a mere platitude amongst our historians that our marvellous expansion has been the result of accident rather than of design. We may all acknowledge that the greatness of the Empire has been thrust upon us, and that the irresponsible actions of individuals rather than the deep-laid schemes of statesmen have brought it about. Whether shaped by divine favour or gigantic luck, the British Empire as it appeals to foreigners is a huge monument of aggression and aggrandisement, the creation of a Machiavellian statecraft, the outcome of a nation's selfishness and greed. The limits of the globe, which a few centuries ago appeared immeasurable, are now within the view of all. The land-hunger of other nations cannot be satisfied if the portion of one is on so large a scale. While we merely robbed inferior races which disappeared before the white men, our encroachments were unperceived, and aroused no more than a passing feeling of envy, perhaps even of secret admiration. But colonies are now appraised at a higher value than formerly, and our neighbours are no longer content to acquiesce in a doctrine which placed the uncivilised portions of the globe at our command alone. Too late in many cases have continental statesmen awakened to the situation that has been brought about; eager to push the interests of their countrymen, to gain some share of the foreign possessions which in the popular imag-

ination gleam with wealth, and have been the foundations of our wonderful prosperity, they find themselves forestalled. Turn which way they will, the ensign of our country is always in view; some evidence of British enterprise or domination reminds them of a successful rival, of a pioneer that has been earlier in the field than they.

I remember going to India the year that the King, then Prince of Wales, was returning from his tour to our greatest dependency. One night at sea we saw a mighty blaze to the south-eastwards. The sky before us burned with the glow of some tremendous conflagration. The incandescence of some mighty luminary seemed to shine below the eastern horizon with a radiance rivalling that of the other sun which had left us to the west. As we drew nearer we surmised the origin of the brilliant spectacle. It was Gibraltar illuminated to greet the heir-apparent of the Empire that blazed out its loyalty to the world around.

"What I like about it," said a passenger, "is that it means England." He expressed in those few words the sentiments that probably animated every one who saw that scene. While that beacon could burn the Empire stood firm, and the fact was proclaimed to every foreign ship that sailed the seas near Gibraltar. That light flaming in the forehead of the East promulgated the ubiquity of the race, its labours, its victories, its spoils. To Englishmen it blazed forth patriotism, incentive, and example, lighted the path of duty and responsibility, beckoned them to renewed efforts. But, we may be sure, it did not rouse such feelings in foreign bosoms. If it glowed towards us with genial welcome, to them it burned like a lurid defiance in the sky. The labours and struggles that had rendered the kindling of that beacon possible represented little to them but greed and rapacity, the victories

were robberies, the spoils plunder, the trophies thefts. What seemed to us pardonable pride, doubtless appeared to the prouder Spaniard exulting insolence. What animated us galled him, what we had gained was his loss, our glory was his shame; and while we reminded our own people that we were everywhere, other nations had no need to have the inconvenience of our presence recalled to them. Our triumphs in the field of expansion had denied space to them. Nothing can succeed like a success which with its progress destroys the possibility of imitation.

Under such conditions we need not look beyond our own achievements for the causes of Continental dislike. The head and front of our offending is, that as an Empire we exist at all. We are in the position of the heir who is keeping others out, and whom his connections will unconcernedly see dead. Neither love nor scruples have averted from us the doom of the intruder. To strike at our heart will be the surest way, and our heart is London.

In the bureaus and libraries of scientific soldiers, who have made strategy the study of their lives, how to strike a blow straight at our vital parts is the problem which must inevitably claim first attention when the possibility of hostilities with England is considered. No success elsewhere could approach in importance the effect of even a minor victory on the soil of the United Kingdom. The key of the situation is to be found in the regions that abut on the Channel and the North Sea. Imperial defence centres in the southern and eastern counties of England. It is there, undoubtedly, that when the moment is thought opportune the thrust will be aimed, and some day the battle that will decide the fate of half the world will be fought out on the farm lands and downs of our eastern and south-eastern counties.

That no effort to assail us in the vital spot has been made before is due, of course, to the presence of our fleet—a fleet with all the prestige of Trafalgar and the Nile still clinging to it—hitherto unsurpassed in *materiel* and size and skill.

In the light of recent experiences in South Africa, in the face of the situation produced at home by what has, after all, been a successful war, who can doubt but that it was our ships alone which stood between us and the intervention of one or more of the great Powers? Can there be any doubt, again, that intervention would, in the temper of our people, have been but the prelude of another war? It was the "great shipping" that alone saved us from a contest in which, as a hundred years ago, the stakes would have been our Colonial Empire or even our national existence.

By some it will be denied that war with a great Power would produce any prolonged struggle such as the great wars with France exhibited. They point to the artificial basis on which the lives of our home population rest, and they argue that we shall stand and fall entirely by our navy, and that after a few victories have established the superiority in sea-power of our opponents, the struggle will be practically over. For their fleets, riding the waves triumphantly, will cut off our supplies of food and raw material from abroad, and we can be starved out and compelled to come to terms more cheaply and quite as effectually by investment as by means of an actual invasion and the assault and capture of our capital.

In a former chapter this feature of our national weakness has been discussed, and the difficulties attending an attempt to cut off our imports examined. But it is possible to conceive of a policy of invasion which did not look to the surrender of a starving people for its reward. A raid on our arsenals and

manufacturing districts might be worth undertaking, and might be carried through without the overwhelming and permanent naval superiority which the policy of investment would demand.

Again, even were our coasts closely blockaded, the ingenuity and enterprise of individuals, tempted to try their fortune by the richness of the prices to be earned, might, and no doubt would, find means to smuggle food-stuffs into the country sufficient to ward off starvation from our people.

And if, as was sure to be the case, a war of the first dimensions meant for us a struggle, if not on the Continent, at anyrate somewhere in the more distant regions of the globe, our fleets would find calls made upon them that would interfere with their continual presence near our coasts. Warlike stores, ammunition, men and horses would have to be conveyed to our armies not only from home but from Colonial ports also. All the various impedimenta that clog the lines of communication of an army would have to be carried to the fighting-line on land. The lines of communication would have to be safeguarded, and the centre of gravity of the war might sometimes shift temporarily to them. Occasions might be deliberately brought about, or be the result of mere chance, when the watch on the Channel was relaxed, or when a severe local reverse might for the time being lay it open.

It is not, therefore, the case that home defence hinges entirely on food supply, although that matter is, of course, the largest factor concerned. To refuse to contemplate the possibility of a garrison holding out for the relief the fortune of war may bring is the attitude of a craven. British garrisons have set the mother country worthier examples than that, or our sun would have set long since, and, we will trust, such insidious suggestions will be repudiated as they have

been where smaller, though still great, issues were at stake.

The question, moreover, remains as to whether a blockade which could cut our communications in a military sense could be established and sustained; whether, in fact, the investment—for it would amount to nothing else—of the island fortress could be made complete. I have shown that it is very doubtful whether the food supply could be cut off; but private enterprise would not come to our aid where it was a question of sending arms and ammunition and men across the seas. Nor would the Declaration of Paris help us in this respect. High authorities have asserted that a close investment of our long coast-line could never be established. It could scarcely, in any case, be maintained until our navy had been annihilated. The annihilation of our sea-power is no more a matter for profitable speculation in Imperial defence than the annihilation of their armies would be in the case of Continental Powers. Our sun would have set forever when that occurred. We need not worry to consider how we should peer and pry about in the twilight of our nation's fortunes that would succeed those days of national humiliation.

The possibility of a blockade is, however, a naval question which I can only approach with extreme diffidence, and certainly shall not venture to pronounce a confident opinion upon.

But, whatever view be taken of its effects, a blockade or investment implies a permanent and universal superiority at sea. The question of an invasion comes under a different category.

The success of an invasion of our shores would, if the hostile operations on land were not rapidly decisive, also depend on our opponents being so superior in strength at sea as to be able to hold the Channel for a protracted

period. On the other hand, the operations might be rapidly decisive or so mischievous as to permanently embarrass us. Assuming, however, that Napoleon seriously intended to carry out his great project in 1805, it must be admitted that inaccuracies greater than may, in such a connection, be conceded to rhetoric make us distrust the soundness of his views.

The famous appeal of July 1804, "Let us be masters of the Straits for six hours and we are masters of the world," is diluted on the 8th of May 1805 in one draft of instructions to Villeneuve to the comparatively prosaic words: "If your presence makes us masters of the sea for three days off Boulogne, we shall be able to make our expedition composed of 160,000 men in 2000 vessels." But later in the day the exhilaration has effervesced a little more, and according to the second draft of the letter the time required has extended to four days, while the numbers of the host have dwindled to 150,000.*

Whether the scheme was in reality feasible under the circumstances we need not stay to inquire into here. What concerns us more is, that the conception was formed at a time when the British navy was in the very zenith of its strength, and was led by captains whose skill and courage on the waters have never been surpassed in the history of the world. Moreover, whether the invasion was seriously intended or not it was certainly the cause of very serious anxiety in England. If it were not more than a gigantic and elaborate scheme to deceive Austria as to Napoleon's true intentions, then it was the hopelessness of gaining command of the sea that made it so. And what were the conditions that rendered a contest with England for the mastery of the sea a hopeless one? The British navy was at that period superior to the combined forces of the whole of the rest of Europe.

The navy of the Emperor was the one which came

* *Vide* Colomb's "Naval Warfare," p. 201.

next to our own, but in 1804 we had 175 ships of the line as against 50 of the French, and 244 frigates with which to oppose 32.

In other words, the total British fleet was 419, and that of her great rival only 82.

In 1805 the combined French and Spanish fleets could boast of 61 ships of the line in commission, to which we were able to oppose 83 ships of the line* actually in commission, and yet we were inferior in numbers when at Trafalgar the decisive battle was fought. Our obligations all over the world, the protection of our commerce, and the interests we possessed in every region of the globe had absorbed the remainder of our strength.

It was under such conditions that ideas of invasion could fill men's minds with apprehension, could call into existence the martello towers and military canals, which are the silent witnesses to-day of the fears that vexed our forefathers a century ago.

In 1870 the great military system and the army, the inheritance handed down to France from the great emperor, lay broken in the dust. Another great leader had appeared, another formidable organisation threatened to dominate Europe. The fate of Denmark and of Austria and France once more stirred anxiety in us: we began to set our military house in order and to consider schemes of defence.

Again, I do not want to critically examine into the merits of those schemes or inquire as to how far our fears were mere nightmares or substantial terrors.

An oak that has attained so vast a growth as our Empire must always rouse some anxiety when storms and gales set in, and we may be certain that we shall never be without tremors, if not panics, while we are content to sit beneath the spreading branches and trust

* The figures are taken from Mr M'Hardy's "The British Navy for a Hundred Years."

that it will survive for the future just because it has weathered many tempests in the past. But what is of real interest at the present time is to count the milestones we have passed in the last thirty years, to compare how we stood in 1872 with how we stand at the present moment.

Then, as now, there were alarmists; now, as then, there are those who deride the anxiety, which the other side terms forethought; and in a few cases the very same voices are still making themselves heard in our councils.

In 1872 Sir, then Mr, William Vernon Harcourt, gave a lecture at the United Service Institution on "Our Naval and Military establishments regarded with reference to the dangers of Invasion."* In that lecture, which I have no doubt all soldiers welcomed as an earnest desire to arrive at some fixed principles in our scheme of national defence, and as an example of interest of others besides themselves on questions which are of national importance, some assumptions were made as to the composition of the possible invading force which we need not enter into here. But the opinion as to the capacity of foreign mercantile-marines is to us, looking back on it from the standpoint of to-day, extremely instructive. We may assume that a man of great ability, with a vista of political success leading to the highest places before him, did not speak on such a matter rashly. Yet in dealing with this part of the subject we find such statements as the following:—"If you imagine the mercantile-marines of great countries like France, Germany, and Russia, you will find that they have not got any." In a footnote the figures on which the part of the statement as regards Germany was based are given. They are as follows:—

"North German Lloyds from Bremen, 20 large steamers; Hamburg line, 17 steamers; Baltic Lloyds, 3.

* Vol. xvi. p. 575 of the Journal of that Institution.

Total 40. There are about 15 more in course of construction." Mr Harcourt went on to say: "If you come to examine the history of the mercantile-marine of all nations except England, you will find it is practically insignificant. Now, I think that is a matter which has to be borne in mind. You will find in most cases where great military nations have had to undertake foreign expeditions, like the French to the Crimea, they have had to put their soldiers on board their men-of-war. Why? Because they have nowhere else to put them." He goes on to ask the soldiers present to tell him how many transports would be needed to convey the invading army to our shores, which he with much moderation only placed at 50,000 men. The figures as to the shipping employed by us in the Crimean expedition, and also in the then quite recent Abyssinian expedition, were next discussed, and the huge task involved in an expedition beyond the seas very properly brought forward. In the chapter on "Combined Naval and Military Expeditions," these needs and difficulties have been dealt with by me: the only object in my now mentioning Mr Harcourt's lecture is to show how widely the situation of thirty years ago differed from that of to-day, and how, according to the very arguments then brought forward to belittle the dangers of invasion, the reality of any apprehension which may be felt to-day is established.

France was the Power then most feared, and in that lecture the French menace is thus disposed of: "You have paired off against the great naval power of the world, and you have remaining nineteen English ironclads of the first class after you have disposed of the French navy by an equal force."

"Now," it is asked, "what is the condition of the other navies of Europe? First of all, let us take Prussia as a country from which invasion is considered formid-

able. Prussia has three ironclads, none of which she has been able to build for herself. . . . That is the country by which a nation with forty-nine ironclads is about to be invaded!" Russia is next considered. Russia is stated to have five ironclads, the best of which is inferior to the *Warrior*, then one of our inferior warships. The united ironclad navies of Russia and Prussia are put at seven (it should, it seems to me, be eight) ironclads. "Russia and Prussia put together have what you may call seven moderate ironclads among them as against nineteen ironclads of England of the first class *after disposing of the French navy.*" The italics are mine. But the situation was still more in our favour. "Then if you like to add to these two countries the United States, which possesses no ironclad that is capable of crossing the Atlantic with safety unaccompanied by a consort, you have a combination of Powers with which you have to deal. . . . Should we have war made upon us at once by France, Russia, Prussia, and the United States, if you can conceive all these countries combined, you will find that, after putting ship for ship against theirs, it would leave ten ironclads of the first order to spare as against them."

It is admitted that this state may not always exist. "It may be altered. Russia and Prussia may build more vessels. They have never been able to build one yet, although I believe they are trying to do so. Where are the dockyards of Prussia? . . . Where is Russia going to construct against us? Where is the United States going to construct against us?" and so on. Finally, Mr Harcourt argued that if invasion in the face of superior naval force were impossible, the true safeguard of these islands was a superior navy. "Therefore, if your force is not, upon the figures I have shown you, overwhelmingly superior, *let it be made so.*"

Thirty years ago the answer was easy. Our naval force *was* in adequate superior strength, and, moreover, the capacity of other Powers as regards transport by sea was vastly different to what it is to-day. But can we now feel the same confidence as we did then? Is our navy "overwhelmingly superior" to a possible combination even of two Powers? Is the question of water transport a hopeless difficulty to invaders? Above all, is it extraordinary that men should doubt the confident assurances of those who cherish false economy rather than security, when a statesman of the first class could say, in 1872, that Germany and Russia and the United States could never hope to rival us in naval strength, because not only were they so far behind us at the start, but they could build no ships to make up their leeway. How do the contemptuous terms in which foreign navies are discussed read in the light of what we see to-day?

In the discussion that followed the lecture in question, it is true that the accuracy of some of Mr Harcourt's figures were impugned. Invasion was not viewed by many whose memories we cherish with respect as an imaginary terror. A second line of defence was considered essential. The details of relative naval strength were not challenged. If anxiety then was not held to be absurd, can it be dismissed to-day as foolish? How do we stand at present? what is the relative situation?

Germany and the United States are taking the place of Russia and France as the great foreign shipbuilding Powers. Spain as a great naval Power has almost disappeared altogether. Germany has taken her place, Japan has become formidable also, and Italy too has progressed. Those who wish to find chapter and verse for the strength of foreign navies will find the names and tonnage of all the ships in existence set forth in

"Brassey's Naval Annual for 1901" (p. 79), and will there find recorded the immense change that has taken place since we were last plunged in a great naval war and had an absolute preponderance in naval force over the whole of the other European Powers combined. Now, it is with that of the dual alliance alone that our strength is usually measured, and at the close of 1901 we find it stood thus as regards completed battleships:

| Class | England | France | Russia | France and Russia |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Battleships— | | | | |
| First-class . . | 26 | 10 | 8 | 18 |
| Second-class . | 11 | 10 | 10 | 20 |
| Third-class . . | 10 | 11 | 1 | 12 |
| Total | 47 | 31 | 19 | 50 |

Taking the list of effective fighting ships in existence and under construction into account, the comparative strength given on page 89 of the "Annual" is as follows:

| Class | Great Britain | France | Russia | Italy | Germany | United States | Japan |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Battleships— | | | | | | | |
| First-class . | 38 | 13 | 14 | 9 | 16 | 17 | 6 |
| Second-class . | 11 | 10 | 10 | 5 | ... | ... | ... |
| Third-class . | 10 | 11 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 1 | 1 |
| Total Battleships | 59 | 34 | 25 | 16 | 23 | 18 | 7 |
| Cruisers— | | | | | | | |
| First-class . | 43 | 19 | 13 | 5 | 5 | 13 | 6 |
| Second-class . | 62 | 23 | 7 | 5 | 8 | 16 | 10 |
| Third-class . | 44 | 13 | 5 | 11 | 18 | 5 | 6 |
| Total Cruisers | 149 | 55 | 25 | 21 | 31 | 34 | 22 |
| Coast Defence Ships | 17 | 14 | 16 | 3 | 19 | 10 | 1 |
| Torpedo Gunboats | 34 | 21 | 9 | 17 | 4 | .. | 1 |

Since these pages were written, the handbook for 1902 has appeared, and gives the following figures, showing comparative strengths in ships built and building (p. 64):—

| Class | Great Britain | France | Russia | Italy | Germany | United States | Japan |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Battleships— | | | | | | | |
| First-class . | 41 | 13 | 15 | 9 | 16 | 17 | 6 |
| Second-class . | 11 | 10 | 10 | 5 | ... | ... | ... |
| Third-class . | 17 | 15 | 8 | 2 | 15 | 11 | 2 |
| Total Battleships | 69 | 38 | 33 | 16 | 31 | 28 | 8 |
| Cruisers— | | | | | | | |
| First-class . | 49 | 19 | 16 | 5 | 6 | 13 | 6 |
| Second-class . | 62 | 23 | 7 | 5 | 8 | 10 | 10 |
| Third-class . | 46 | 13 | 8 | 11 | 20 | 11 | 8 |
| Total Cruisers | 157 | 55 | 31 | 21 | 34 | 34 | 24 |
| Torpedo Gunboats | 34 | 21 | 9 | 17 | 4 | ... | 2 |

I have no desire to pose as an alarmist, and therefore do not quote the comments which accompany these tables.

The figures are simply brought forward by me to illustrate the changed situation in which we find ourselves when we compare the conditions which obtained in 1805 and 1872 with those of 1902. If in 1872 it were possible to say that "Prussia has three ironclads, none of which she has been able to build herself," or that the best of the five Russian ironclads was inferior to the *Warrior*, "one of our most inferior ironclads," or that, "if Prussia began to construct, we could build ten vessels to one she could build"; if under such conditions there was anxiety in the country, as there was, is it to be wondered at that there is in some quarters anxiety now? and is it not manifestly

the fact that the old derision of anxiety has no longer any sting in it? and is not the case against invasion far less strong to-day than what it was thirty years ago?

But it is not only that our royal navy, strong as it is to-day, is, nevertheless, by no means so relatively powerful when compared with the other naval forces of the world as it was at the previous periods; but we are less secure owing to another circumstance—our second line of defence used to lie in the inadequacy of the hostile transport that was available to convey an invading force to our shores. In 1872 Russia had practically no sea-going steamers at all.* That was the case with Germany also, according to the same authority.

The neutrality laws would prevent their hiring transport, we were told. The Germans could not hire, and had no transport of their own, and so invasion by them was a mere chimera of the imagination. If such were the resources of North Germany in 1872, what a vast change do we discover to-day?

Out of a total of 596 vessels of over 5000 tons which all the countries of the globe possess Germany contributes 124, and Great Britain 346; the United States comes next with 36, and then France with 23.

The two largest steamship owners in the world are German companies, the Hamburg-American Line of Hamburg, with a total of 668,000 tons, and the Norddeutscher Lloyd of Bremen with 556,000 tons. Next to these come Elder, Dempster, & Co. of Liverpool with a total of 386,000 tons. Germany in 1901 owned a total of 1293 steamships of 100 tons and upwards, representing 2,417,410 tons; France 679, representing 1,068,936 tons. The figures for other countries will be found on page 711 "Whittaker's Almanac" for 1902. It

* Journal of United Service Institution, Vol. xvi. p. 581.

is unnecessary to give them here: those that I have mentioned are a sufficient answer to the question: "Where are they going to find their transport?"

As regards the number of ships that would be necessary to convey a given force across the North Sea or Channel, we find ourselves in this difficulty: that all our figures are based on the experiences of expeditions involving voyages of at least a fortnight, for a few hours men might be packed very closely, indeed, how closely it would be somewhat difficult to say without actual experiment, but so closely, without a doubt, as to render any of the calculations I have already given quite valueless. An officer stated,* at the time that the discussion took place at the Royal United Service Institution in 1872, that a first-class merchant-ship of the day could convey 3000 men for the short voyage involved.

Commander W. Dawson, R.N., estimated the necessary transport at 1000 men per ship of 2000 tons, the horses at 300 per ship of the same size.

It is scarcely necessary for me to labour the point further, because in a former chapter the difficulties which lie in the way of expeditions across the seas have been noted: they are not intended to be made light of here, but the fact remains that the landing of a hostile force on our shores is by no means so remote a possibility as it was thirty years ago, and that it is no longer prudent to regard home defence as a matter which may be entrusted entirely to our navy.

It is perfectly true that we must stand or fall by our navy, and yet when that is fully and frankly admitted the necessity for improving our means of home defence still remains. At present the lack of organisation and the inadequacy of the means at

* The late Colonel Valentine Baker, in a letter to the *Times*.

our disposal has this sinister influence, that it dangles a colossal prize before the eyes of the Continent,—a prize the mere chance of winning which would justify a gamble. With such stakes on the table, many an acute intellect is turned to consider the problem which under other circumstances would be dismissed as insoluble for practical purposes. When the leap is within the compass of vigour and enterprise, the venture will no longer be regarded as suicidal folly or the scheme of a dreamer.

The late Admiral Sir W. R. Mends, R.N., C.B., Director of Naval Transport, who had planned and carried out the Crimean disembarkation, stated, in a lecture given by him at the United Service Institution on "Disembarkations" in 1862, that with proper preparations he saw nothing to prevent 10,000 infantry and 24 guns being carried at each trip from the ships to the shore, "allowing each trip to occupy two hours, which is a long time: in six hours we should have 30,000 infantry and 72 guns on shore."*

How, then, it will be asked, are we to put invasion beyond the realms of practical politics? to what extent should we be prepared on shore? Manifestly the time is not yet when we need vie with Continental armaments and aim at being a great land as well as a mighty sea-Power. The answer to our question is to be found in asking yet another. What force is it possible that we might have to meet? Some have contemplated an invasion by 50,000 men, others have gone as high as five Army Corps—Napoleon thought of 150,000 men. With all the difficulties that attend a disembarkation in view, I should be inclined to estimate a potential invader's strength at less than Napoleon's figures. But, even placing it as half that force, we can well imagine a moment—have we not

* Journal of United Service Institution, Vol. vi. p. 406.

indeed lately seen it?—when such an intrusion would be an embarrassment of the highest importance.

Because I do not believe that an invasion would be attempted when our hands were free. A surprise is not quite so simple a matter as some appear to imagine. Even should we be absolutely ignorant of what was impending, a condition which in these days of telegraphs it is extremely difficult to imagine, the mere process of disembarking men and horses and guns at places where arrangements would have to be very primitive and impromptu would probably take up a period of time long enough to allow of considerable resistance being organised and a force capable of delaying the invaders being forthcoming. It is when our hands were full elsewhere, when the bulk of our army was abroad, that war would far more probably come upon us, and with recent experiences none can say that a too lurid picture is conjured up when three Army Corps or their equivalents are supposed to have been sent from our shores.

No one three or four years ago would have contemplated the possibility of a quarrel in South Africa demanding such a clearance of fighting men from Great Britain as we have just witnessed. Four years ago we should have classed a conflict with the Boers as among our "little wars." Yet although, undoubtedly, our struggle in South Africa may justly be regarded as an abnormal one, in so far as both strategy and tactics are concerned, it is by no means clear that we might not again have to send an expedition as strong as regards regular troops from home as has lately been found indispensable.

Had we been plunged into a war with Abyssinia, instead of with the Boers, three Army Corps from home would have had to join the expedition. If they had

not been promptly despatched, perhaps even that force would not have been found sufficient.

A war on the North-West frontier of India would certainly have called as many men away.

If we were called upon to defend another portion of our Empire not less than an equal force would have to leave these shores.

Complications in the Far and Middle East demanding strong expeditions might very possibly arise.

The truth is that regular troops will not go so far against uncivilised foes as they formerly did. The spread of armaments all over the world, the facilities of communication, of manufacture, and of supply, are now so great that the semi-savage races of the globe are no longer to be subdued by mere handfuls of men, formidable because infinitely better armed, and not always invincible even then. So that it is no alarmist apprehension which pictures us with the equivalent of three Army Corps engaged in a struggle beyond the seas, and, while thus occupied, being menaced by a great Power. Again, we might be at war with one great Power, might have despatched the force I have indicated to make the counterstroke which is a recognised feature of our military policy, and might find ourselves at war with a second Power while the issue of the first conflict still hung in the balance.

Some of our remaining troops would be in Ireland, and I think it is safe to say that they would stay there.

As things stand at present we should have no more organised units left, but a considerable residuum of men of doubtful military efficiency, whom we may term the *levée en masse*. Would the presence of these obviate a panic and give confidence should a naval disaster, not necessarily final, befall our fleet? I do not express any opinion, but I pass on to consider what the factors in military strength are.

The first is *moral*. Whether we are to possess it or not at some hypothetical future moment belongs to the realm of prophecy, and in avoiding that I will imitate all prudent men.

The next is discipline. That depends on good officers—officers with a bearing and knowledge of their profession that inspires confidence and commands respect. We certainly have not an adequate supply of such men for all our forces. Skill on the part of those in the positions of generals comes amongst the first necessities of an army, if not first of all. Whether we possessed that ingredient of victory is alone to be tested by experiment. We might hope, at least, to have professional, painstaking men who were physically capable and had some knowledge of their business, but with a war going on abroad they would probably be lacking in the experience of large commands which foreign officers possess.

In mere numbers we should have an advantage, because we should be fighting at home; while not only would the question of sea transport limit the size of the invading host, but the necessity for carefully guarding base and lines of communication through a hostile country would eat up many men, and the force actually available in the front line would by no means coincide with that which disembarked.

But if quantity were on our side quality would certainly be on the other. A force chosen for the invasion of England would represent the very flower of the army that undertook that operation. In courage and physical vigour it is possible that no great difference between the combatants would be visible, but as regards training there would be a considerable gulf between the two. We should have to fall back on the remnant of the regulars left in the kingdom and on militiamen and volunteers, who are but amateurs

compared to the highly-trained officers and men of Continental armies.

In one respect, however, we ought to be greatly at an advantage, and that should be in the knowledge we possessed of the country, and the embarrassment which its enclosures and hedgerows would impose on foreigners accustomed for the most part to manœuvre over fenceless areas. But every part of the Continent is not the same, and districts enclosed and wooded are to be found there as well as in England. We should do well, therefore, not to build too much on this advantage, although it would probably tell in our favour.

We have run down the whole gamut of military efficiency, and we find that we cannot justly claim even a majority of the qualifications that make armies formidable for the force that would be left for home defence. Indeed, many will contend that I have put the case too favourably for our troops, and that with a large expeditionary force abroad the residue of our military forces would be less equal to the comparison which I have instituted than appears from these pages. Granted, however, that it is not pessimistic, and that the manner in which I have put the case may be accepted.

It will then be apparent that we want organised forces of a strength greater than the two remaining Army Corps, to make us secure. The *levée en masse* will not do to repel the sort of invasion that we should have to meet. To begin with, the officers who could be trusted to lead it are not forthcoming, and when war had claimed its percentage of sick and wounded there would be a great dearth, not only of those for regimental duty, but of those of the staff. Such experts as supply officers, signallers, and engineers would all have been absorbed by the part of our forces abroad. Even military clerks would not readily be found.

What then do we require?

Organisation, system, method.

Organisation implies readiness for war, and is the true talisman of success. What is war but a business? What were the greatest leaders but good business men? Frederick, whether war or administration engaged his thoughts, was always a business man. Wellington, who boasted that he owed his success in life to being always ready a quarter-of-an-hour before it was absolutely necessary, was essentially a worker and man of business all his long life. A copy of almost every letter he ever wrote is in existence, and that, too, in his own handwriting. As a man of business, administrator, statesman, even as a lawyer, Napoleon was pre-eminent; as abnormal in the bureau as he was on the battlefield, as certain to have attained success, if his intellect were given scope and turned in the required direction,

This matter of home defence has, in fact, got to be treated as a business matter. We want to be so well organised at home—I do not say so strong—that any potential opponent would feel that, even if he did succeed in landing, say, four Army Corps, he would have such opposition to dispose of as would render any sudden, rapid, and decisive success, any raid on London, or enterprise of that kind, a hopeless undertaking.

We should always have so much behind the fleet that a naval disaster in home waters need cause no panic, that our people should sleep secure when the fleet had left the Channel to harry our opponents, that we could send away such forces as at the moment of writing* are abroad, and still never feel doubtful as to the efficiency of the units left behind.

What I mean is this. We, before the war, had for some years an organisation, I daresay a very admirable one, for home defence. All the units in the United

* 1902.

Kingdom had their allotted places, the barracks were formally assigned, the ammunition columns and transport vehicles had their designations duly painted on them; but the waggons went to South Africa, and were labelled afresh according to the units of the force which has been in that country for the last three years. The elaborate scheme for home defence went promptly to pieces, as a little reflection will show that every scheme similarly devised must inevitably collapse.

What stands between this nation and the spectacle of all the forces normally at home mobilised for home defence? Obviously the navy, and that command of the sea, which we have fair grounds to hope it will maintain. But should we go to war while our naval power is supreme, we have learnt that one part of every strategic scheme would involve the despatch of a powerful expeditionary force from these shores. Therefore, if at war with a Continental Power, and in possession of the mastery of the waves, two, if not three, of our Army Corps, according to what we are ourselves legislating for, would be out of the country, and the process of reinforcing them with drafts to make good the wastage caused by sickness, wounds, and death would absorb another large section of our strength.

It is true that we shall not at once know that we shall have command of the sea. Time was when we could count upon it, but against a two-Power combination we should now certainly have to gain it by force of arms; we might have to fight for it even as against one Power. Therefore for a certain period the command of the sea may be in the balance, and the presence of all our forces at home will be necessitated, and may be called for to defend these islands against an attack, which we should, as yet, have no right to regard as out of the question.

Such a state of uncertainty would not, however, be

very prolonged, and if, as we have a right to expect, our navy establish a supremacy, we shall not keep our strength wasted in England. In short, a condition of things under which all six Army Corps would be absorbed in a scheme of home defence must be abnormal; and the defence of these islands by what remained of our land forces after three Army Corps had been used up abroad forms the real problem to be dealt with. Although every eventuality should receive attention, we should legislate for what is likely to occur, not for what is only a remote contingency.

If we had not sent a force abroad with the view of counterstroke or diversion, the defence of India or Canada—or the demands of a war, I need not necessarily call it a small one,—with some Power other than European, might have called away forces equal in dimensions to those just named. It is, as I have said, far more probable that we shall be assailed when our hands are full elsewhere in some one or other, or even in more than one, of the various cases I have specified than when they are free. It is, in fact, infinitely more probable that we shall have to look seriously to our home defences when a considerable proportion of our regular forces are out of the kingdom than when they are in the barracks of Aldershot and Salisbury.

If that be so, as I believe it is, what is the course for us to take? The answer is that we should be guided in defending our homes by the same principles that underlie all sound defensive measures. An officer who intends to occupy a defensive position first allocates such a proportion of the force under his command to counterstroke as he considers necessary. In Imperial strategy, I have pointed out that we should do the same. Having provided for counterstroke, the remainder of the forces at disposal are devoted to the

defence of the ground to be held, the provision of local reserves being kept in view. But the force constituting a general reserve for counterstroke or other purpose is held under the hand of the supreme leader ready for eventualities, and altogether apart from the defence of the position which is separately provided for. If this special reserve be allowed to become absorbed in the line of front held, it will never be available at the moment it is required, and there will be no counter-attack, nor any compact body of men ready to face an unforeseen contingency.

If in drawing up a defence scheme for these islands the Army Corps which should be available to go abroad, and which very probably when the attack came would be abroad, are counted upon as available for defence pure and simple, manifestly the scheme will be upset, and something else of an impromptu and hastily-put-together character must be adopted in its place. The substitute will, in all probability, bear the marks of haste and incompleteness upon it. In all probability it will not be what may be termed a business-like arrangement. It will be a makeshift, as expensive and inefficient as a makeshift invariably is.

The remedy for such a state of things is not far to seek. We should legislate for home defence, not as we may wish the situation to be when the call sounds, but as it will most probably be—as it should be if we intend to carry out a sound strategic plan, as it must be if we are assailed when we are involved abroad in operations such as I have indicated. The first two Army Corps might have their places in one scheme of home defence, but it should be an alternative scheme, and in the scheme which would in all probability be the one that would be actually adopted, the first two Army Corps, and preferably the third also, should be regarded as out of the country.

Having deducted the expeditionary force of three Army Corps, or say 120,000 men, from the forces * which under the new scheme are to be organised for various purposes, a surplus would remain which, if properly trained and organised and commanded by efficient officers, would be more than sufficient to render us reasonably secure,—enough to give us a mobile field army, a garrison for London, and troops for coast defence. The advantage of locking up 100,000 men ear-marked for the defence of London may be questioned. Passive defence is abhorrent to strategy. If the field armies of England are destroyed, the garrison of London may defer but will not avert surrender. Fortifications have proved the ruin of other armies besides the one that surrendered at Metz in 1870. It was not by digging himself in round Richmond that Lee in 1862 rolled back the apparently overwhelming tide of the Federal invasion. Entrenchments were Banks's ruin in the valley, and Osman Pacha held on too long to his at Plevna. It is well not to let any visions of heavy guns and earthworks and forces incapable of manœuvre fill our minds when we picture the defence of London, but to remember that parapets and ditches, because they appeal to popular imagination, are not necessarily the soundest safeguards.

The fortifications of our dockyards and harbours

* The army available at home, according to the Parliamentary return by Mr Brodrick in March 1901, was to consist of the following forces:—

| | |
|---|---|
| Regulars | 155,000 |
| Reserves | 90,000 |
| Militia | 150,000 |
| Yeomanry | 35,000 |
| Volunteers | 250,000 |
| | 680,000 |

On the one hand, the war will have greatly depleted the reserve; on the other hand, the three years' service system will act as a set-off and increase it.

come under a different category, and while they have met with more sweeping criticism and more violent opposition than those inland, have nevertheless a more logical *raison d' être* and supply a real need.

One of the lessons of the Spanish-American war was the demonstration of the value of coast defences in supplementing naval action which it affords. It is hardly the place here to recapitulate what has been said on this subject in a previous chapter, but the absence of coast defences then so injuriously affected the action of the American fleets, and supplies so excellent an illustration of how ships and forts may be of mutual support, that a few words on a subject intimately connected with home defence may be added here.

Those who decry fixed defences on the coast are wont to dwell on the superior value of mobile naval forces, and their arguments have often been met with the reply that if the defence of our coasts were to be entrusted to ships alone there would be a considerable risk that the defensive force would very probably be removed, and would leave its charge open. It is perfectly consistent with the full recognition of the powers of mobile forces, such as I myself have just expressed, to point out that in the case of naval forces a distinct danger in thus leaving important places open does exist. The peculiar characteristics of fleets and ships exhibited, more especially in their powers of evasion which have been dwelt upon in a previous chapter, lie at the root of this form of risk; but that it does exist in more than theory is vouched for by the experiences of the Americans on their Atlantic seaboard during the late war.

Stationary objects such as seaports, harbours, and estuaries can be defended by stationary works, and stationary works are both more economical and more

effective than floating batteries. Naturally, then, they should be called in to our aid when possible, more especially when by doing so we shall release other forces for active duties, but also because they cannot be taken from their special tasks.

During the American war the six monitors intended for coast defence were diverted from that object and sent away to distant points. Two even went as far as Manila.

The long coast-line of the United States was notoriously inadequately defended. What produced uneasiness in professional men quickly engendered panic amongst the populace. We read of unmeasured, irrational, unworthy terrors amongst the inhabitants of the Atlantic seaport towns. Contemptible very possibly, and ill-founded beyond doubt, but still real, actual, transitive, and therefore not to be disregarded by a popularly constituted Government.

A Government whose existence depends upon an electorate cannot disregard popular clamour and the feelings of the multitude, and without some permanent protection to our coasts it would be in the power of an enemy to seriously embarrass the policy of our country by working on the weaknesses, fears, and ignorance of the population.

Because the American coast defences did not inspire the masses with confidence, the Government had to use the navy to supplement them and make good their inadequacy; and the fleets, whose true *rôle*, as has been explained, should have been an offensive one, had to be content in the first place with a defensive attitude. No one, I think, who has done me the honour to read these pages will accuse me of any love for fixed defences or of any desire to minimise that necessity for an all-prevailing navy which dominates the whole of our Imperial policy. I trust I shall not be misunderstood in what I say.

The mere fact that we are so dependent on foreign aid for our supply of food differentiates our case from that of any other nation, and modifies the relationship between forts and ships in a very high degree. But it does not alter the fact that there are two elements in sea warfare, and that they are complementary to one another. It is a question of proportion, and also, be it noted, of methods. Bricks and mortar on land fronts should be sparingly indulged in; gun-power, the choosing of judicious sites for guns, and comparatively light entrenchments, will go far to give the necessary security, and will not entail the same expense.

A system of coast fortification sufficient to free the fleet, give confidence to the civil population of the country, and prevent any of our important seaports falling by a *coup-de-main* and being utilised as a base of operations by an enemy, is a first necessity in home defence.

The machinery, or what may be called the business of home defence, is next separated from that which provides for a force available for action beyond the seas.

Finally, our remaining forces and resources of all kinds are, or should be, so handled and allocated that they may, when called upon, act with the greatest readiness and under the conditions most favourable to their application.

Preparation should become the key-note of our system. Not only, however, as regards units, their organisation, equipment, and training. For there is a wider form of preparation of equal importance, which will go far to enhance the efficiency of our forces however highly trained and systematically organised they may be.

I mean that form of readiness to meet an enemy which finds confidence in a complete knowledge of the

ground on which we are called upon to fight him. The theatre of war when home defence is under discussion, is the soil of these islands. The whole area involved, measured by continental standards, and still more by those we ourselves have grown accustomed to abroad, is comparatively small. The area in which there is any considerable probability of operations occurring is smaller still. The chapter which dealt with disembarkations will have made this clear. To deal with this smaller portion of our islands is not a very gigantic task. To do so would cost nothing, would provide excellent training for officers, and would give an interest to work which the routine of the barrack-square and the drill-field can never supply.

I do not mean that in our case the works need actually be constructed or the roads made, but every portion of the country where fighting could occur might be systematically studied, as indeed parts of it have already been surveyed, and although not a sod be cut or spadeful of earth removed, the needs and requirements of every potential position to resist invasion—its advantages and limitations—might be recorded, and the information carefully preserved for use at a moment of emergency. Similarly, the places where advanced depots and posts on the lines of communication would in certain eventualities be established should not only be known, but should have been carefully surveyed and examined, and the plans necessary to adapt them to the purpose for which they are intended should be drawn up. The facilities afforded for entraining and disentraining troops at the various railway stations, and the alterations and improvised additions in platforms and sidings which war would demand, should all be calculated and ready to hand.

The facilities for encamping and bivouacking troops in every district should be accurately known ; the existence of water, fuel, suitable soil, and the tactical features of the site. Here, it will be said, is created a huge task, which may all end in labour thrown away. The labour would not be thrown away, because the officers who had been employed upon these estimates would all have learnt much of permanent value to themselves and to the service, while they were contributing to the preparedness of their country for war. The staff tours we are constantly engaged in from the Staff College are all to a large extent taken up with work analogous to that I have described, and form perhaps the most instructive portion of the course at that institution. The adoption of the methods I have foreshadowed in our military districts would simply mean the extension of the system of staff tours to every command, and would bring with it the benefits derived from those set on foot at Camberley.

Circumstances alter so rapidly at home that reconnaissances already made would need revision every few years, so that the mine of instruction afforded by them is never likely to be worked out and exhausted.

Organisation and training are the real secrets of victory. It was not because they were braver or shot better that the Prussians in 1870 overthrew the race that sixty-four years previously had trampled their fathers underfoot. Who shall question the courage of the defenders of the Château Geissburg or the splendid heroism of the counter-attacks at Woerth? Not Gravelotte and not Sedan, but Algiers and Mexico laid the third Empire low. The over-confidence of easy victories blunted the intelligence and corrupted the standard of the French army. The rough-and-ready methods of savage warfare broke in pieces against the

highly-tempered weapons of a scientifically developed army. Generalship will redress many deficiencies of armament, but capable generals are the product of trained officers. A *levée en masse*, even though it may include many brilliant marksmen, is still a congeries of individuals, not an army. It will furnish the materials from which to make an army, but it is no more a military machine that an ingot of steel is a quick-firing gun.

Well-trained officers, therefore, are demanded not for the comparatively few regulars who may be out of the country when men are hurrying to the alarm posts, but for that amorphous and invertebrate body, individually valuable but collectively little more than men with muskets, on which some day we shall perhaps have to rely for the defence of the heart of the Empire, and in whose keeping the fate of the country may some day be placed.

Some, not without reason, will say that now I have touched on the weakest point of all, and that what I have left last outweighs in importance all that has gone before. What if when the gun is to be made the steel itself is not forthcoming? what if when the bullets are to be cast there be no lead? The best moulds and most scientific shapes are valueless then.

True; but it is not my purpose to enter on a disquisition on conscription, or military training in Board Schools, or rates of pay, or rifle ranges. To defend his country is the citizen's first duty. In our country he has been in the habit of paying, by means of taxes, other people to perform that duty for him.

He has done it by deputy.

Of late, finding that his wages were not sufficiently attractive, he has increased them. If the substitutes (for our recruits are but substitutes) are still not forthcoming, the wages can be increased up to the spending

power of those, namely, the electorate of this country, who prefer not to perform a duty which the great majority of other people in the world do for themselves. When the income of the people — that is to say, of the country, will no longer bear the expense of the army, they must either soldier in person or leave their possessions open to plunder. If you cannot afford a gamekeeper, you must walk round your preserves yourself or let the poachers have their way. It is the task of statesmen, chosen from the spokesmen of the electorate, to provide the men; it is the duty of officers to say how many they want, and to organise and train those they get. Besides, the question of voluntary and compulsory service has been before the country so long, and has been so ably argued, that there is really nothing new to be said about it. Moreover, it has become a political question, and I desire to avoid the discussion of politics.

But we may note that two circumstances give us hope for the future. One is that a very large number of people are strongly in favour of some form of military training being adopted in Board Schools. As attendance at school is compulsory, we find here the germ of compulsory military training. The period of compulsory service with the colours when it does come may, therefore, be reduced to a minimum now impossible, because the elementary parts of soldiering will not take so long to acquire, as, when as at present, a wretched yokel who has never handled a rifle or been taught to march has to be trained.

But a greater impulse and help should come from that federation for Imperial defence which we trust is in the future. The Colonies are without the prejudices and inherited political trammels that hamper us. It is possible that the example of the Colonies, in the majority of which liability to military service

is a feature of defence, will bring home to the people of this country the advantages of a system which has few real drawbacks.

And, finally, perhaps I may say too that the argument most commonly used against any form of compulsory service for home defence is that it is not needed, because it is for an army liable to go anywhere that recruiting is difficult, and that, were it adopted, we should actually have too many men for the defence of England alone. Even putting aside the great advantages as regards training which liability to service would bring with it, this argument is quite a fallacious one.

In the first place, we should not need to keep up all the existing units. If a smaller but adequately trained Home army could be set in the field by us, a foreigner would as soon plan an invasion of the moon as of our country. Secondly, liability to service does not forbid exemption from service. The supply can be adjusted to the demand easily enough, and varied according to circumstances. Thirdly, the experience of every officer who has commanded a unit is that there is never any difficulty in getting men to volunteer for service abroad; so many usually come forward that selection amongst many applicants often causes much heart-burning.

Compulsory home service would therefore bring us a foreign army too, and would supply us with officers for the units at home in addition.

Thus the question of the provision of the men may be dismissed. They can be got, and must be got, by some means or other. Meanwhile, let us organise and train what we have.

# CHAPTER XII

## ORGANISATION FOR IMPERIAL DEFENCE

In the preceding pages the combined action of the army and navy has been dwelt upon at considerable length. I have more than once perhaps ventured with undue rashness on the realm of the sister-service, and have rushed in where less mortal beings might have feared to tread. Yet, having gone so far, it becomes necessary to penetrate still further, and that, too, in other directions before the subject can be left. The fighting strength of our Imperial system includes more than the Imperial army and navy, and no estimate that overlooked the aid of our Colonial forces could be regarded as complete. It may, however, be thought that these latter are included in the terms of our discussion, and that when we speak of the army we bring those troops to whom the Empire owes so much within our arguments. If courage, loyalty and zeal were the only qualifications that war demands from armies, it would, indeed, be unnecessary to add another word.

But this is very far from being the case. Power, which is the product of carefully prepared organisation, is a potency vastly different from fighting energy developed on the spur of the moment. There is as great a distinction between them as there is between trained skill and natural aptitude, between the professional and the amateur, the raw material and the manufactured article. The existence of latent strength being assured,

we want to get the greatest possible value from it, to be able to call it rapidly into activity, to direct it with nicety and precision, to economise and husband as well as wear and exhaust it. We want, in other words, to co-ordinate the various forces we may have at our disposal, and it is clearly impossible to do so until we not only know exactly how much we can command, but can count upon their being ready to our grasp when the time comes for us to pick them up.

The conception of Imperial defence put forward throughout the preceding chapters has hinged on all the weapons in the armoury of the Empire being regarded as always at the disposal of one directing mind for combined use. Elements of force, whether by land or sea, have been viewed as forming one military power, pooled—so to speak—in a common reservoir of strength from which we draw what the needs of the moment may call for.

Imagination may take a higher flight and picture every service and every Government placing its resources at the disposal of a central administration, which, in turn, hands them over to a directing will to assure a general security. Such is the highest standard of Imperial efficiency. That is what we ought to possess, may even at some future period enjoy. But is it more at the present time than the dream of an enthusiast? Many will, no doubt, dissent; but hardly anyone will be found sanguine enough to argue that we can as yet point to the existence of what is more than a mere embryo. But that there has been of late an altogether astonishing and rapid development towards the ideal no one can deny. However much Imperial federation may have formerly been derided, the South African war has blown to pieces any doubts as to the possibility of such a federation. The young life is there, the seed has sprouted; it remains for time

and patience to foster and protect development. But we must look for progress to the slow expansion of nature, not to injudicious forcing; to the gradual action of health, not to the rampant growth of a disease. To correlate and judiciously utilise the forces of the mother country is a labour that lies first before us, and that alone will not be a little task. We may be but a narrow space removed from a satisfactory solution of that comparatively minor problem, but what a world of controversy lies between us and the larger question!

The meeting of Colonial premiers this summer, if it has not, so far, had any wide-reaching consequences, has at least laid another stepping-stone to a larger scheme, in the promise of other conferences every four years, and in the increased contributions to the navy which have been arranged for. We shall not know all that was done at the proceedings, and resolutions may not amount to much; but the Imperial federalist need not despair. The conference itself implies an understanding more satisfactory than anything that could have been anticipated ten years ago, and something more substantial than a demonstration seems to have been achieved.

According to the Blue-Book which has just lately appeared, which gives an account of what took place, at least one result of the conference is to be found in the fact that the Commonwealth Parliament will be invited to make a contribution of £200,000 in place of £106,000 per annum towards the cost of an improved Australasian squadron and the establishment of a branch of the Royal Naval Reserve.

New Zealand is to be asked to send us £40,000 instead of £20,000 for the same purposes.

Cape Colony will contribute £50,000 and Natal £35,000 towards the general maintenance of the navy.

Canada does not participate in this agreement.

But Newfoundland will contribute £3000 per annum (and a capital sum of £18,000 for fitting up and preparing a drill-ship) towards the maintenance of a branch of the Royal Naval Reserve of not less than 600 men.

On the other hand, the Admiralty promises to send better ships to Australasia, and engages to supply, amongst others, a first-class cruiser.

The results, no doubt, fall immeasurably short of the glowing conceptions some may have formed; but a decade, no small portion of the life of an individual, occupies but a tiny space in the pile of an empire's fabric. We have travelled far of late on the wave of an Imperial crisis, but must not expect progress on the billows of a storm every year. Yet may the lapse of years, like the flow of an unseen tide, carry us ultimately to our destination if we leave ourselves and our fortunes to the keeping of its imperceptible strength.

Meanwhile, eager and zealous souls must never fail to bear in mind the exact relationship in which we stand to our Colonies, and the true nature of the connection that binds us to them. They must temper sentiment with stubborn facts, and lay to heart the lessons of history.

In many respects that teaching should be encouraging to us. We have profited by our lessons. The great colonising Powers of the past did not always succeed in retaining the affection of their offspring as we have done during the last century. Our predecessors in sea-power, when they founded settlements, often sowed dragons' teeth, from which sprang mutual hatred and internecine strife. If their children leaped into being with all the warlike qualities of the parents, they showed small sign of the filial ties that bind families together. They left home because the parental roof

had no longer space for them, or because commercial interests tempted them abroad. But when they sailed away they trailed behind them none of those bonds of union with their birthplaces that are woven during long years of common dangers, common struggles, and common triumphs. Where the parental influence has not had time to assert its influence filial piety will outlive self-interest in the case of states no longer than amongst individuals. Athens, at one period almost as mighty relatively to her contemporaries as we are to-day, might boast of many cities and colonies thrown out as off-shoots of the vigour and energy of her race. But that vigour was also exhibited in the abrogation of parental authority; while independence of character degenerated into selfishness and intemperate license. Pride of race may have supplied a slender thread of connection, the Olympic games and a few such institutions a point of meeting. While the Greeks might quarrel with one another, they could make common cause against those who were outside their civilisation. But the colonies and cities that dotted the shores of Asia Minor, Italy, Sicily, and Africa acknowledged no overlord, and were governed according to almost every imaginable system from republic to tyranny, according as popular feeling had swayed while they were in process of development.

The Greeks may have carried their country with them wherever they went, but distinct units and separate organisms soon sprang up in the resting-places where they settled down.

It has just been stated that a common danger, such as the Macedonian inroad, could compel the states of Greek origin to combine. But when the danger passed the necessity for union disappeared also, the old rivalry or antagonism returned, a Themistocles could go over to the Macedonians, and Greek ascendency finally perished as much at the hands of strife and intrigue

amongst members of the race as at the sword point of the Romans.

Our Empire differs from that of the Greeks because, although it has grown up on a commercial basis, the ties of national and family life have never been severed. England is still home to those who dwell at the other end of the world. Warm affection and sentiment, stronger, perhaps, than community of interests, still bind our Colonies together. The same loyalty to the same Crown makes patriotism all over the Empire converge on one spot. But in the lion's brood all the characteristics of the lion can be fully traced. The courage, independence, and strength which have made us what we are characterise our children too. The spirit that made loyal Englishmen rebels in the case of Cromwell and Hampden made foreigners out of loyal Colonists when America broke away. If the Greek emigrant carried his country with him, those who left our shores did so in an even more unmistakable fashion.

Commercial interest is a very perishable bond of union. Where monetary profit is concerned the sterling attributes themselves of the British race make men unwilling to abandon their advantage, still less their rights, for mere sentiment; or drop the substance for the shadow when striking a bargain. What else binds us to our Colonies? The Parliament at Westminster cannot, although it produces a Colonial Minister, fulfil that function; for the great Colonies are self-governing, and are not likely to assent to or admit the jurisdiction of a body in which they are not represented; and the question of how they may be represented in an Imperial Parliament is one beset with so many difficulties that its solution is not likely to come in the immediate future. The King and the personal loyalty his rule inspires is, in fact, at present the only

real link, except self-interest, that holds us together, and even that link, strong as it appears, is not so complete as it should be, because the view taken of it by all Colonials and by all of our own people is not the same. To many in the Commonwealth or Dominion the King appeals as completely as a sovereign as he does to the inhabitants of these islands. In the minds of those who hold such a view the Crown governs the dominions beyond the Atlantic and at the Antipodes through their local parliaments just as it does England through its representatives at Westminster. But that is not always completely understood by all of us at home. Some imagine that because Parliament governs some of it, it governs the entire Empire, and do not, in many cases, understand that the Colonists resent such a claim. The principle which insists on representation accompanying expenditure, and consequently taxation, one more deeply rooted in the hearts of those of British origin than any other, stands, in fact, at present across the road to a completely united Empire.

To have a complete federation we must have a common Parliament and a common war-chest, to which the members of the federation would contribute *pro ratâ*. But until that day arrives Great Britain must bear the compulsory burthen of Imperial defence almost alone, and the co-operation of the Colonies, where their own homesteads and cities are not concerned, must remain as absolutely a matter of their own choice as it is at present. We could wish for nothing more genial, spontaneous, and satisfactory than it has been in our late war, and we can wish for nothing better as long as the same support is forthcoming in the future, but we cannot model any scheme of Imperial defence for operations beyond the regions immediately concerned on an uncertain quantity. However much we may appreciate it, assistance which is voluntary, and therefore

precarious, cannot be reckoned up and parcelled out. We can only regard it as a floating asset which may or may not be available according as the temper of a popular assembly sets.

It is hardly necessary to say that with purely local schemes of defence we have here no concern; local dangers will be met by them, and the responsibility for them rests on the local authorities who draw them up.

Yet should the vulnerability of an empire be measured rather by the absence of any local weakness than by the existence of all but universal strength, it is the distribution rather the sum of force which tells. A local disorder may readily grow into general disturbance. The health of a corporate existence like that of an individual should be secured by a general watchfulness.

It is evident, then, that considerations of the highest constitutional importance bar the way at present to any complete federation of the Empire as regards military action. An Imperial Parliament, Imperial taxes, and an Imperial exchequer must be created before the battalions of an Imperial army can be mustered. Whether such a consummation will ever be realised must be doubtful: that it is not at present within the realm of practical politics is sure. And another thing is certain too: should it ever come it will not burst upon us a sudden creation, but appear almost imperceptibly as a growth and slow development. The "Republic" was only imagined, not called into being, by Plato. No statesman, however subtle his brain, devising constitutions in a library, like an Abbé Sieyès, will, by a bright inspiration, hit on the happy combination. We must wait for times and seasons of natural expansion, for the gradual swelling of the tributaries and the gathering pressure of a rising flood.

Let us descend a step till then, and be content to work on a lower plane.

If we cannot regard all the forces of the Empire as a whole, may one not so view those we control in Great Britain?

The suggestion is by no means new. In one shape or other it has constantly appeared since our attention has been drawn to the true foundations of our security, and as lately as the past summer (1902) it has again been in men's mouths. It even exists in the actual form of the Defence Committee, which is occupied with the great questions and heavy responsibilities which its charge brings with it. But it has frequently been pointed out that every one of the men who compose that body have already as much or more work in their own special departments as they can efficiently deal with. We have been told that the delicate and complicated questions that the Committee grapples with demand complete freshness of mind and concentrated thought, such as men oppressed by other cares can scarcely give. Men have said that the very name "Committee of Defence" is a misleading one, and that what the members of the Committee ought to consider is not protection, but war generally, and the preparation for war. Certainly no sound system of strategy can ever prescribe a purely defensive attitude, even to operations conceived in the least aggressive spirit. You do not defend yourself in a combat by merely warding off blows. If war be forced upon us, we must be ready to strike, and we must intend to strike. There appears some ground, therefore, for the contention that to label a council which is engaged in warlike deliberations as defensive is to open the door to misconception. We need not quibble as to names, however; there is a larger question connected with the defence of a great empire which we wish to investigate.

War certainly includes both offence and defence. But war for Great Britain includes something above and beyond and yet essential to the success of either attitude.

War is war, whether by land or sea; and we have never waged a war, as distinguished from a rebellion, since the time of Cavaliers and Roundheads, in which both our army and our navy were not acting in combination.

But not always was our sea-power turned to good account, not always was it used to get full value from our army. To assert so much may only be tantamount to saying we are human. No mortal enterprises but must sometimes go wrong: no schemes but must occasionally miscarry. But we strive, nevertheless, to act so that the chances at least are in our favour; and in launching an expedition over-sea we should at anyrate be clear and persistent as to what we want to do. Now it can scarcely be said that the expeditions to Buenos Ayres in 1807 were the outcome of well-matured consideration; or that, whatever view may be taken of the strategic conception that dictated the Walcheren expedition, the execution displayed anything but a gross waste of our strength; or that Castlereagh's contemplated raid on Boulogne was well-matured; or that when Sir John Moore was sent to Sweden before he went to Spain our councils were well advised. It was certainly more fortunate than scientific that at the moment when we decided to launch an expedition where sound strategy called it there were three several bodies of troops provided with transports available, all destined for enterprises to be conducted at the same time in three widely divergent directions. Again, the success of Howe in shifting his attack from the *Delaware* to the *Chesapeake* has been used by Captain Mahan as an example of the misuse of sea-power. If Howe won

Brandywine and captured Philadelphia, Burgoyne was isolated and had to surrender at Saratoga. In other words, even when we possessed command of the sea we sometimes did not know how to use that priceless gift. Soon our sea-power itself failed us. The two Bourbon Powers were at war with us, the French and Spanish fleets made a combination more powerful than any we could set against it.

It is scarcely necessary to recount the dreary tale again or pursue the course of futility to the last disgraceful finish. The loss of half a continent and the goodwill of our own flesh and blood should be sufficient to prevent our forgetting it. The criticism which a brilliant naval writer has directed on our strategy at the close of the war with our American Colonies might have been turned upon it by Napoleon himself, the military leader who is thought not to have understood naval matters. When Captain Mahan demonstrates how the British forces were divided so as to be unable to render one another mutual help, when he derides the policy that made them operate out of combination, he is only illustrating that maxim of the Emperor's which insists on one line of operations being best. The circumstances of our time have shaken the infallibility of the dictum as regards the present day but not as regards the past.

And later, when the coalition against us on the sea took from us the amulet that has often served us before and since, it was to concentrate and not scatter her ships that England should have striven. The sailor who shows how an endeavour to cover every point could only expose our ships to defeat in detail, enunciates a principle that is, or ought to be, familiar to every officer on shore. The wisdom that demonstrates how the whole theatre of war should have been taken into our purview, and insists that at the outset it should

have been considered carefully and decided clearly what part of the assailed empire it was most necessary to preserve, and what might be left to the chance of capture, appeals to soldiers as well as seamen. War demands risks and sacrifices whether it be a land or a naval war, whether the fate of a province or of an empire is at stake.

Mahan tells us that England, everywhere on the defensive with inferior numbers, could not hope for victory through any strategy or tactics, that did not comprise vigorous, nay even rash, action and initiative.

Napoleon facing the whole of Europe in 1815 proclaims the same gospel. Apparently overwhelmed, he advances to meet his foes, almost gained, and certainly deserved, the palm that rewards such energy and vigour. Lee and Jackson have given us even more sparkling illustrations of the same eternal truths; while on the other side vast hosts on shore and full sway on the waters were unavailing because ignorantly utilised.

There is nothing, then, in the nature of the principles involved that would prevent one central authority from dealing with the great strategical questions that are raised in Imperial defence. It would, of course, have to be assisted by professional advisers from each service, and it would be desirable that the immediate control of each service should be in the hands of those advisers.

The difficulties that would be encountered in making an organisation of this kind are, however, great. Many naval officers are persuaded that in any department where navy and army were both represented the influence of the army would weigh the balance down. It is not necessary to inquire into the reasons that underlie such views: they exist, and have to be faced.

Then there are objections from the political standpoint. Unless the heads of the army and navy were Ministers with seats, as at present, in the Cabinet, it is asserted that the interests of the services would suffer. If one Minister represented both services in the Cabinet, he could not deal with the mass of detail that would congest his office. The bolder course suggested by the late Lord Randolph Churchill that there should be professional heads of army and navy with seats in the House of Lords, and Members of the Cabinet, is the more logical conclusion to arrive at. He would have linked the two services together by the creation of a Minister of Defence, who would be in the Cabinet also, and a Member of the House of Commons. The duty of such a Minister would be to propose the annual expenditure on both services in the House of Commons, and he would be their mouthpiece in that assembly. Two objections have been raised to this suggestion. One points to the jealousy Parliament is said to exhibit at any infringement of its control of our forces, and quotes constitutional precedent against it. The provision of armaments, ships, and men is, however, a matter of money; and while the House controls expenditure it holds the army and the navy in the hollow of its hand. The Members of the House must be convinced before the money is supplied: the power of the purse is the determining factor: who holds the purse commands the situation.

But it is further urged that the Minister who has to place the estimates before the House and to justify them in debate will inevitably become invested with responsibility for them, and that then the *raison d'être* of the scheme will disappear. For we are to note that it was to ensure direct personal responsibility that the principle of professional control was

insisted on by the talented author of the scheme. You cannot have personal responsibility without professional training, knowledge, and control; while to ensure efficiency you must have personal responsibility. Genius or good fortune may, once in a century, achieve success by abnormal methods, just as a man may paint beautiful pictures with his feet, or write with his mouth; but business men do not take risks on such terms.

But the scheme I refer to was said to be weak precisely where it was intended that it should have been strongest, for the responsibility of the professional Ministers created by it would tend to diminish, while the power of the Minister who was the link between them, but who sat in the popular assembly would grow. Eventually he would become, it was feared, too powerful, and the evils of civilian control would once more flourish in their old luxuriance. When we follow the reasoning of men whose great knowledge of our Parliamentary system commands our respect, and who foreshadow difficulties such as have been named, we can realise how Moeltke, rising from the complicated problem, concluded, "that not only had we not got an army, but that from the nature of our constitution we could never have one."

That personal responsibility is the only true method to attain military efficiency every man who has a shadow of experience is well aware. That the evils of civilian control have over and over again marred the fairest schemes of commanders every student of military history appreciates. Civilians and soldiers who are men of business are in full agreement as to the advantages of permitting men who know the details of a business to manage it. On the other hand, the essential characteristic of men of business is to be practical. And, as practical men, let us face the

facts of the case squarely. Rightly or wrongly, men who have made politics their profession regard such suggestions as have been thrown out as inexpedient, and assert that they cannot even be entertained. As in duty bound, then, let us accept that view as decisive, putting from us and placing on one side the criticisms that have been levelled at it. If we cannot proceed in one direction, let us, as practical people, see whether we cannot make a scheme of a less ambitious character carry us forward. Let us again take a step lower, and inquire whether a system which will improve our position cannot be constructed on a humbler scale.

Could not the authority, be it represented by a single war Minister or a defence committee which watched over Imperial defence, have at its elbow a body of men who were absolutely relieved of all administrative or executive functions of any kind except those which their immediate duties compelled them to undertake, whose whole energies and time were devoted to purely military questions, such as organisation, manœuvres, terms of service, or the provision of stores?—a body whose principal thought was bent on strategical questions and the preparation for war? —men who would never be troubled with questions as to discipline or promotion of officers or the transport and housing of troops, who would simply assist in indicating what ought to be the broad features of our policy, leaving the doing of it to those whose special duties led them to execute but not to devise.

A man will always deal first with questions that are urgent, and matters of routine are just the things that are always urgent. A regiment or battalion has to go to India or the Cape; returns have to be prepared; volunteers called for; weakly, young, or men at their close of engagement, to be weeded out; transport has

to be arranged for; and so on. Such details in no wise affect the defence of the Empire. It does not matter in that respect which regiment goes or who commands it; whether an officer has not passed for his promotion, whether another ought to be seconded. A battleship or cruiser is needed on a foreign station —that is to say, a unit of naval force has to be despatched. The choice and equipment of the particular unit for that service should be a matter completely outside the purview of the authority that has thought out the question as to whether or not the increment of strength it represents is demanded. When, as must often happen, a decision of far-reaching consequence has to be taken, a man whose mind is full of such details as have been enumerated cannot at once enter into all the questions that are raised. He brings a brain already fagged and tired to the consideration of affairs that call for the readiest apprehension and the most vigorous examination. The head that can carry everything in it, can dismiss one set of ideas and at once take up another, is the phenomenon of a century. It is good abilities and not transcendent genius for which we should legislate. A sound system will pull mediocrity through, a bad one may baffle genius. In foreign countries such a department as I have foreshadowed is formed by a great general staff: a staff which is distinguished from the remainder of the staff in this respect that it is entirely, or almost entirely, occupied with questions beyond those of administration. By some it has been called a thinking staff; but, whatever be its designation, it is occupied with matters to which an administrative staff cannot find time to devote adequate attention. Such a staff does not exist in this country, and there are those who do not hesitate to assign to this deficiency the inadequacy of our preparations and mistaken estimates of the

powers of our opponents that have marred many of our wars both little and great.

With any controversial aspects of the subject we are, however, not called upon to deal; and it is very far from my intention to put forward views or opinions on anything approaching polemical questions. But an abstract discussion on the organisation of Imperial defence must lay bare the foundations on which that superstructure is to be built.

Those who have followed me thus far will probably admit that all the ramifications of the great subject demand a special organ of some kind to deal with them. Cable communications, food supply, commercial harbours, coaling-depots, dockyards, and arsenals will alone absorb the attention of a special department. But there is much more to be thought of when the protection of the Empire, passive and offensive, comes up for consideration. In Continental countries the chief thought of the great general staff must naturally be turned to land warfare, and that, too, with their immediate neighbours. But in a case such as ours a purely land war would be all but an impossibility. An island Power can do nothing without its navy, and in any body corresponding to the German Great General Staff which it might create, some representatives of the navy should find prominent places. The Intelligence Departments of both its services, working under their respective heads as at present, would be affiliated to the war staff (as it might be called), and would undertake the duties which these departments now perform in placing information as required in its hands.

But a staff occupied with the problems of war must exert an influence in educating officers, and does not fail to grow into touch with other institutions which are most largely occupied in training officers for war.

War college is what the institution in close contact with the general staff is termed in Germany, and in America the same name has recently been adopted also. Names, like details of uniform, do not greatly influence the efficiency of armies. The essential point here is to recognise that a great council or staff, call it what you will, can and does often exist to study and deal with the higher aspects of war, and does, in doing so, draw in to its assistance the brains of the younger men who are preparing themselves for service on it. The education of officers for the general staff is, in fact, a matter which the highest and most distinguished persons have often personally undertaken. Moeltke, the most distinguished general of the latter half of the last century, and one of the great men of history, was occupied in training and educating the German staff at the same time as he was drawing up the strategic schemes which might one day have to be carried out by them. He forged the weapon while he planned the design it was to accomplish: he designed and put together the machinery that was to execute his conceptions; and he recognised that the one was complementary to the other. Therefore he was as proud to educate his staff as to control the strategic policy of a great empire; and his mind was not diverted from its legitimate task by the intrusion of questions which officers in command of Army Corps were quite competent to settle, which, however important in themselves and to individuals, do not influence the fate of nations. But Moeltke, it will be urged, was an exceptional man, and he is dead. Frederick trained and led a great army too, but the victors of Rossbach and Leuthen were the defeated of Jena and Ligny. Wellington had a method also, and produced a mighty engine in the army that marched from the Tagus to the Garonne and swept the legions of another magnificent military system before it. The tactics of Nelson

are no longer those of our living admirals. Such are the arguments that invite us to believe that it is men rather than methods that we must seek for. We are told that the crisis has always produced a leader, and that he will answer to his cue again.

Such reasoning is false. It is the argument of men either by nature lethargic or whose utterances are governed by what political expediency or party purposes dictate. The efficiency of the German army was built on the ruins of outworn systems. The phœnix rose from the ashes of its former self.

The very disaster of Jena was the salvation of Prussia. The humiliating terms of Napoleon prompted ingenuity, and a method of evasion was discovered in the system of short service and large reserves. Careful study, always thorough, always striving to turn the means at hand to the best account, called into being a set of administrators and staff-officers who made the Prussian army a business concern. The business survived Scharnhorst and Gneisenau: it has outlived von Roon and Moeltke. So does a great bank or railway company see successive managers disappear. The shipbuilding yards of Belfast and the Clyde have flourished and still flourish. Though men come and go, the vast works at Essen and Elswick still hum and throb. The great banks and the famous breweries pass from father to son, and the business continues long after the individual who founded it has passed away.

Continuity of policy is the secret of success: the end and object always kept in view; the means adapted to them; the influences of change allowed for; combination and economy of effort studied. The managers of great railways are, or ought to be, studying the trend of trade, the opening of new markets the means of competing with rival lines. Questions of high finance must occupy the thoughts of some, at anyrate, of the men who direct

great banks. And so in every department in which human thought and energy is engaged there is a spirit which guides behind the hand that executes.

If the study of the higher features of war and the efficiency of the fighting forces of the country is found to be sufficient to absorb the entire energies and attention of a distinct set of staff-officers in the great Continental armies, surely it would even more completely absorb them in the case of a world-wide Empire, where the problems are far more complex and the fields of research so much more various and extended? With us as has been urged, officers of the navy should be associated with those of the army in this higher council or staff, because with us every possible war brings on co-operation between the services. Our force operates by water; that of France and Germany by land. But it would be presumptuous in a soldier to offer any views as to the exact shape and form naval energy and activity on such a staff should assume; and, moreover, it has been urged that our navy needs a war staff all to itself, and, if so, that necessity should be first satisfied.

There are many directions in which the two services can co-operate, and in the chapter which deals with combined operations some of them at least have been set forth. But there are others also less easily defined in which each of the two services are so closely associated together in their work that to separate the spheres of their activities is almost impossible. The large strategic questions as to whether our policy should be attack or defence, the direction of our attack, the strengthening or temporary abandonment of certain places—these are questions which are common to both services, and can, in fact, only adequately be considered by a joint conclave. There should be perfect harmony of view on such matters, and harmony, moreover, not due to indifference or neglect on one side, but such as is the outcome of a

thorough and prolonged exchange of views, the growth of mutual conviction, not the product of persuasion or clever pleading by a partisan. Policy will only be touched upon here, therefore, when it affects both services, and I shall, in discussing the duties and functions of a staff such as has been foreshadowed, leave the exact line of demarcation between the two services undefined.

The first duty of this staff, by whatever name it might be known, would be preparation for war in its highest sense—that is to say, a definite scheme for every conceivable contingency would be drawn up, considered, criticised, amended, and finally approved of by its members. What would become of such schemes is, for the purpose with which I am writing, immaterial. In what is here set down an attitude of detachment is assumed. The study of Imperial defence leads to certain conclusions, and demands answers on questions generated by those conclusions. Those who are sufficiently cynical or indifferent can also divest themselves of all personal interest in so momentous a question. It may, as far as I am concerned, be treated, too, as a purely academical problem, and regarded wholly in the abstract. Without pretence of having arrived at so high an atmosphere of pure reason we may, however, still busy ourselves in inquiring how the forces at the disposal of Imperial defence can best be organised when we are aiming at efficiency and not expediency. The schemes might be read, and carefully pigeon-holed, as perhaps other able schemes have been before.

That need not deter us.

The important thing is that they should be known to be in a pigeon-hole, should be referred to, amended, discussed from year to year, so that there would always be a definite scheme, always a war policy, always a means of assisting the decisions of a Cabinet by a

reference to the deliberately recorded views of professional men drawn up with a full sense of responsibility and with no other object than the good of the country in view. The men who drew up the schemes might be dead when the moment for their being put in practice arrived; their voices would still be with us none the less. They might have left headquarters for the outlying regions of the Empire; their opinion would still be available in Pall Mall. The members of such a staff, although they had assisted to frame, would by no means always be called upon to execute the project. Its army members would simply be the assistants of the Commander-in-Chief. The commander of an expedition would not necessarily be selected from amongst them. A man less able and less knowledgeable might, because of local experience or some special quality, be preferred. In the event of a great national crisis probably many, or even all, the members might be needed with the fleets and armies on the sea or in the field. But as no members, or very few, would remain permanently on this staff, an able man would get his chance just as do the other members of the headquarters staff at present.

But we may pass to the consideration of the nature of the work that would be always going on.

It would embrace, in the first place, the prospect of conflicts with the various civilised Powers of the world and the combinations they might make against us; the exact strength of their armies and fleets; the characters of their Ministers and generals; the effect of a war on their political equilibrium; the loyalty or otherwise of provinces recently annexed; the financial strength of the potentially hostile country; the amount and sources of its food supply; the extent of the detriment war would bring to its commerce—such factors in a potential situation should not be overlooked in the

council chambers of a great war staff, but they should be subsidiary to those that were more intimately connected with warlike operations.

Themes more purely military would be taken up. The approaches by sea to such strategic points as we might desire to seize; the nature of the coasts where landing might be necessary; the rise and fall of the tides; the depth of water near the shore; the facilities for anchoring; the presence of shoals, currents, or hidden rocks; the direction of the prevailing winds; the probability of their producing surf—these are but examples of a hundred questions of the kind that would occupy the attention of admirals and generals undertaking combined operations, and on which a war staff should at short notice be able to supply them with information. Many thousand miles of coast-line, many countries, many nationalities would have to be studied. An appalling pile of drudgery is pictured by the imagination, and the most industrious may recoil at the aspect of the task.

In reality, the labour, if judiciously parcelled out, would be by no means excessive, and would be extremely interesting. It is merely a matter of enough men with enough time to turn enough stones. Much information would be found already to hand: it is rather to know where to look for what is wanted than to collect it *de novo* that is necessary. A patient persistence directed in any direction undisturbed will gradually overcome the inertia of the heaviest task. Methodically, and bit by bit, the whole potentially hostile coast-line of the globe might be mapped and annotated. The efforts of travellers, and of specially selected officers would, from time to time add fresh information, until, in course of years, a veritable gazetteer of military information was compiled.

But even though the best anchorage, most tranquil

beach, or most convenient harbour were to hand, further needs of the landing force would still have to be considered before the locality could be pronounced suited to the enterprise of invasion. A covering position on shore behind which the disembarkation could take place unmolested would form a first necessity. Camping grounds for the troops, water for men and horses, lateral communications; above all, roads for lines of advance and subsequently for lines of communication to the fleet would be demanded. Here, then, are presented to us a whole series of objects for observation and report; further vistas towards which the energies of a war staff might be turned; new realms for energy and industry to conquer.

But these subjects for inquiry in which naval and army officers work together, important and numerous as they are, can be regarded only as preliminary. Having determined by means of them that it was possible to land a force of a given size, the theatre of war in which that force was to operate would next become the centre of attention. The nature of the country, the character of the inhabitants, the state of roads, railways, canals and means of communication generally would come under review. The possibility or probability of obtaining supplies, and the amount of shipping the navy might in consequence have to convoy to and fro, would be considered.

The methods of local requisition and the quantities that might thus be raised would next be arranged and calculated.

The climate and its variations would also be a subject of study, and the prevalence or otherwise of local ailments in the case of men and beasts.

It may be objected that it is inconsistent with the character of our people or the policy of our Government to study plans of Continental aggression; and that to

elaborate schemes such as I have foreshadowed is mere waste of time. It is true that our rulers are no longer likely to imitate the Plantagenets and embark armies for the annexation of Continental soil, but that does not by any means preclude the possibility of our again being compelled to undertake an offensive-defensive war with a European foe, or of our being assailed by a combination of Powers and having to throw our weight into a counter-combination on the Continent. Moreover, the labour involved in the preparation of schemes and reports such as have been mentioned could never be regarded as waste of time. Even if none were ever used, as it is certain some would never be, the compilation of schemes of operations would have afforded instruction and practice of the highest possible value to many men, of whom some, in all probability, would in future become invested with the responsibilities of high command.

War, it is to be remembered, is a business to be conducted on business principles, under business-like managers. For one war which has been won by brilliant tactics or dogged courage ten have been gained by well-planned strategy and careful organisation. Genius has shone most brightly when a disaster has had to be retrieved, a disaster which method and forethought should often never have allowed to occur at all. The presence of genius is problematical: its sudden inspirations often expensive and eccentric. Method, however, can always be counted on, while foresight will nicely calculate and economically administer the expenditure that war must always entail. It is not the least advantage of a thinking or war staff that habits of thought and prudence are fostered and developed by the nature of the work it undertakes.

But there are countries besides those of Europe where we may have to fight, and in some of them the prospect

of future wars can be regarded as by no means remote. The most perfervid survivor of the Manchester School will acknowledge that abroad we must protect our wharves and warehouses from the inroad of savage hordes, the farms and homesteads of our flesh and blood across the sea from the plunder and rapine of ruthless fanatics. The King's peace must be preserved wherever our flag flies; border forays must be prevented; tribal feuds restrained; and on the frontier of more than one of our Protectorates or Colonies there looms the menace of invasion or turbulence. Lurking in the hills of Africa or Central Asia may be found the germ of more than one potential war; while the Far East is pregnant with possibilities. No longer in such regions shall we meet a primitive foe armed solely with the weapons of hand-to-hand combat, recking little of anything beyond shock tactics, of the primæval bow or spear or sword, of a combat where muscle and activity and eye snatched the gift of victory. We shall often meet in place of the naked savage of forty years ago a rifleman armed and equipped as well as European science can provide him,—men organised in units like our own, with a system of command and chain of responsibility, which is often but a clumsy imitation of what we possess but is carried out with the earnestness and vigour of a race with only one intent in view. The thoughts of semi-barbarism are concentrated in a manner different to ours: they fight to kill and destroy utterly—no other considerations disturb their mind or divert them from their purpose; and the dusky soldier is, as a man, immeasurably superior to the degenerate waifs who take the shilling because Society has tested and cast them aside.

It has been shown in a previous chapter that we need a larger army now to deal with the semi-savage races we could formerly engage successfully with very

inferior numbers. We need to treat such opponents, as regards our preparation for meeting them, with more respect also, for we may be called upon to face unexpected developments, and may find the resources of civilisation in unexpected quarters.

The task of reconnaissance and the collection of information with regard to uncivilised countries is not by any means as difficult as that which I have just sketched. The frontiers of our potential foes are in many places co-terminous with our own. The danger of arousing hostile susceptibilities by making inquiries and investigations is not so urgent. We have already many officers on or near the spots we wish reported on: it is not impossible to gain intelligence in numerous ways which need not here be specified. The effect of intervention by foreign civilised Powers could be accurately gauged, and while we are the great sea-Power of the world, need cause us little anxiety. As regards our semi-civilised or savage neighbours all the world over, there appears to be nothing to prevent a methodical and thorough preparation for almost every possible contingency war might bring. For every move of the enemy we should have ready a counter move; for every eventuality we should possess a remedy; every hostile enterprise should find a carefully-planned obstacle in its way.

Nor would a multitude of agents or highly-paid staff be necessary to find the information for us to work upon. At many a foreign station there is little besides the dull routine of the day's duties to occupy the time of the garrison. If encouragement were given to officers, and recognition of good work done were marked by the rewards they aspire to, we should have plenty of volunteers. The danger would rather lie in the direction of too many than too few, and it would be more necessary to curb injudicious energy

and over-zealous action than to impress unwilling assistance.

Where good camping-grounds existed, where water was to be counted upon, where passes lay through the hills, where streams and rivers might be forded, where good positions lay—such should be the subject of inquiry. For every square mile of English territory accurate notes on such subjects should be to hand. As far as possible, the military topography of foreign territories should be known also. It would not be possible to know them all at once; but, in course of time, if methodical attempts were made, a great deal might be accomplished towards the collection of information that would be of the utmost value when plans of operations were drawn up.

This staff, which for want of a better name I may call a war staff, would then be occupied in studying possible theatres of war, the strength and armaments of foreign Powers, in planning schemes for operating against potential enemies, in planning strategical combinations both by land and sea. But when war became imminent it might go further. It might, when a breach was inevitable, begin the preparation of the theatre of war itself.

What, it may be asked, is meant by the preparation of the theatre of war? Some may think that the phrase brings a pedantic flavour with it: that it is redolent of the lecture-room; may even remind us of other phrases, such as "the false front," "position of readiness," which our army has hardly as yet assimilated. In reality there is nothing either new-fangled or pedantic or theoretical about it. It is the resource of all practical soldiers, and our own Wellington has given us the most striking illustration of what it means and of how it should be undertaken.

A wise general or a prudent Minister, when it is

evident that hostilities are certain to supervene in a certain district, takes the precaution to make preparations in the regions where fighting will probably take place such as will enable him to fight at an advantage while imposing difficulties on his opponent. The preparation of the theatre of war is therefore a manifestation of strategical ability; it is one phase, in fact, of the higher science of making war; one method by which we force our opponent to fight us when the chances of the contest are in our favour.

The preparations the leader makes are included under such headings as the arrangements for the feeding of men and horses, for supplies of ammunition, medical stores, and the other necessities of an army in the field. He would often arrange not only for one line of communication but for alternative routes and a change of base; and in our case, since we look forward to possessing command of the sea, the latter would very usually be considered. Posts on the lines of communication and the fortification of certain strategic points would form another care. It is scarcely necessary to say that the fortification of the main base of operations would be most important of all.

The story of the lines of Torres Vedras may be remembered: the application of the lesson has sometimes been overlooked.

When, after the campaign of Talavera, Wellington realised that the support of the Spaniards was not to be relied upon and that he might be driven back on the sea as was Sir John Moore, he set himself to work to prepare the theatre of war wherein the British and Portuguese forces must be ready to fight it out alone. Such important places as Peniche, Almeida, or Elvas were garrisoned and provisioned to face the coming storm. Magazines and depots were placed along the coast and navigable rivers. Abrantes on the Tagus,

Figueras and Pena Cova on the Mondego, Oporto and Lamego on the Douro, each held supplies and stores. Flying bridges were constructed on the Zezere and Tagus. Roads were improved, and a chain of posts connecting Hill with his commander ran along those that formed the communications between them. Signal posts were established, and the chief strategic points connected by the system of visual telegraphy of the period.

A more subtle scheme was developing itself behind. Gradually and stealthily the works that linked the Tagus and sea were thrown up. Their number and dimensions need not be dwelt on here. It is enough to say that during the winter, when her foes seemed about to drive England to bay by the waters, an impregnable region was prepared. Silently and patiently the work was carried on. And when Massena, striding down to consummate Wellington's destruction, was suddenly confronted in the autumn following with parapets that frowned upon him from sea to river, and denied him passage, he was baffled by as brilliant an effort of strategy, as shattering a blow, as ever genius conceived and dealt. The sudden inspirations of the battlefield come but seldom in whole centuries. Many of the great strokes even on the field itself that astonish the uninitiated by their aptness and rapidity are usually the outcome of cunning foresight and unwearying premeditation. The great generals planned and led up to their famous coups just as many of the brightest wits prepared their smartest sallies. Torres Vedras is one of the commonplaces of history: it illustrates what should be one of the commonplaces of policy, for all capable commanders and administrations have worked in the same field. To find examples we do not need to go beyond our own history, nor far back in that. Take the case, for instance,

of Sir Henry Hardinge, one of Wellington's men, a soldier and statesmen of sagacity and foresight. When he succeeded Lord Ellenborough as Governor-General of India in 1844 he foresaw that a rupture in the Punjaub was inevitable. And he, having the power and scope sometimes denied to others less fortunate than he, commenced to prepare the theatre of war. Warlike stores, supplies, and men were collected from whence they could best be spared on our north-west frontier as it then existed. Boats to bridge the river were got together at Bombay, sent up the Indus, and into the Sutlej to be hidden in the river at Ferozepore till they should be called for. More celebrated instances will teach us no more than this casual illustration from a minor war. But in the old days of magazines such preparations as we are considering were an urgent necessity; and when Napoleon spoke of living on the hostile country no man ever more carefully matured his preparations or organised his lines of communication with more foresight. When they have had free scope all our distinguished generals have done their utmost in this direction too. The preparation of the Indian frontier was for years the special care of Lord Roberts. The capture of Khartoum was rendered possible by the continuation of the railway. The extension of the lines of blockhouses hastened the surrender of the Boers. There are plenty of examples of the action of methodical foresight in attaining success in war.

Again, the provision of supplies and the means of conveying them to the front is a subject intimately connected with this preparation of a possible theatre of war. Forage circumscribes the movement of the most daring and swiftest cavalry. Even the most reckless guerilla must feed his men. The power of conveying forage with a force rapidly exhausts itself, because the longer the train of waggons grows the

more animals have to be fed. The rate of interest rises •till the price becomes prohibitive. Therefore stores and depots have to be prepared, fortified resting-places on the lines of supply, where replenishment and refitment may be sought for, have to be provided.

It is not only a matter of collecting the stores but of putting them, when collected, in secure positions. The problem may be presented in various shapes. If the enemy acts in such and such a way, where will our forces move to oppose him, where should our depots be established, and how shall they be fed? It is obviously a grave error to collect supplies where it is possible for the enemy to capture them, and present him with means of subsistence while your men starve. It is also essential to protect a line of rail or it will become an artery of supply to those you fight, not to yourself; and, having protected it, to improve its station accommodation and render it adequate to the needs of an army, is the next step. It seems absurd to gravely enunciate such platitudes: they form the very A B C of strategy, the very pot-hooks of the art of war. Yet have we ourselves furnished practical and humiliating illustrations of the danger of despising them. In these days of cable communications a department charged with the duty of continually watching over such questions, and absorbed by no smaller matters even when the bustle of a coming war may be in the air, should be able to prevent gross blunders in this respect; to suggest, advise, and plan schemes which, always subject to revision according to local conditions, might still bear in their main features the impress of principles derived either from personal or recorded experience.

The preparation of the theatre of war has only been very briefly outlined here, but enough has perhaps been said to show that preparation for war in general

does not by any means round off the duties that fall to a staff charged with the defence of a country.

But, when we deal with such an Empire as ours, preparation of the theatre of war assumes dimensions far beyond any that are contemplated by Continental warfare, or with respect to land warfare of any kind. What is the theatre of war when sea Powers range up to take sides? What natural features hem it in? What mountain chains or rivers or desert places? When our fleets weigh anchor the oceans of the world lie before their scouts; the enemy may be met anywhere; there is no longer any arena; the possibilities are unlimited; impromptu arrangements are impossible. Preparation in a field so wide must be made months and years before the first rumble of the war chariot is heard. The distribution of our fleets in peace time must coincide with their places of assembly for war. The depots and magazines containing food and coal and stores of all kinds, the lines of communication, the strongholds for refuge or refitment have all to be in fighting trim when peace seems most profound. I have already shown how the needs of navy and army should, and can, be made to dovetail in with mutual help and assistance, but what a gigantic task is involved in the due adjustment of the pieces—the support of one service in one spot rendering possible a reduction of strength as regards the other, and *vice versâ*. A staff which undertook that task would be grappling with a problem which would practically amount to the strategical deployment of all the forces of the Empire. When the Great General Staff at Berlin effected the strategical deployment of their armies on a frontier not more than some 150 miles long without any unusual bustle or strain, the world wondered. The rapidity and decisive precision that made us marvel were the outcome of years of carefully directed industry:

but the task was as nothing to what an English Ministry might some day have to face; and then, how high a value would be set upon assistance such as had been maturing for many years behind von Moeltke?

But, it may be said, the very magnitude of the task itself accounts for the instances of its neglect: we do not set men to dig down mountains or bridge the Channel. The excuse will not serve. A very considerable addition to Intelligence Departments, both naval and military, would of course be entailed; but no startling proposition is thus formulated. A great business cannot be carried on without a sufficiency of agents and managers.

Knowledge, in the shape of intelligence as to the enemy and his country, is, in war, worth almost any sum; and when the fullest price has been paid it is probable the cost, as compared to the other expenses of the campaign, is infinitesimal. If the spending of a few thousands before a war,—and there is always some war or other on foot in the case of a great Empire,—will save hundreds of thousands and millions, and tens of millions, according to the magnitude subsequent operations and their concomitant errors and disasters assume, surely they are not thrown away? Would any business man hesitate to engage another clerk if an increase in the number of his clients demanded it? or would any captain risk the safety of his ship in saving the wages of an extra quartermaster?

Objections to adequate Intelligence Departments and the creation of a war staff, on the score of expense, cannot logically be entertained. If a nation really cannot face the additional cost involved, some small items of less necessary expenditure, which as luxuries or ornaments are not essential to the security of its existence, must be lopped away.

The representation of our Colonies on such a staff

as Imperial defence demands is a matter which for the present may be left on one side. When the Colonies make the naval contributions to Imperial defence, which has been noted at the beginning of this chapter, the character of assistance which they will yield and receive, is perfectly understood. What might be done by them on land in an offensive campaign outside their own territories must remain for a long time an indeterminate factor. The mother country will be particularly grateful for whatever it receives, but assistance will be in the nature of a bonus or free gift. As such it should be left out of calculation before hostilities assume definite shape and form. But, although officers from Colonies need not necessarily appear as permanent members of a war staff until it grew into the central one of the entire Empire, some machinery by which Colonial forces were all in the closest touch with the mother country could easily be devised.

No one, however, who takes up the question of the defence of the Empire, passive or active, can avoid noting the most serious obstacle in the way of any large scheme such as has been foreshadowed, or of even the comparatively minor one often put forward on behalf of the army only, ever taking concrete shape. To the minds of men trained for many years on different lines the new departure might appear a veritable Frankenstein, a monster which, once called into existence, might threaten the life of its creator. Professional control would, in such eyes, indeed be worse; but professional control is absolutely outside practical politics at present; nor is it likely to enter them while the views of our politicians remain as they are. It will be replied that personal responsibility is not to be enforced except professional control also be conceded. But it is doubtful whether the terrors and deterrent powers of personal responsibility would be as efficacious towards efficiency

as some imagine. We no longer shoot our failures. It is regarded as barbarous in our highly-cultured existence to visit sins of omission or errors in judgment on the head of a man who has done his best and been unfortunate. Social pressure, political support, and the representations of partisans published in the press will always temper the bitterness of censure. It is at least a question, too, whether acrimonious controversies should not be regarded as too high a price to pay for an effort to partially obtain what can never, under existing circumstances, be completely secured.

But the outcome of the researches and deliberations of a combined professional department, occupied solely in studying the defence of the Empire from the strategical point of view, and engaged in training men to understand and carry out intelligently the principles and schemes it would formulate, would form state papers of such weight and importance that every cabinet would hesitate once or twice before it disregarded them. And in that event the record of the advice tendered, and the reasons for disregarding it would still remain. They would be of immense value to those who, in the future, had to make momentous decisions of the same kind. They would, at a glance, lay bare where, and in what directions, execution had strayed away from conception. Political considerations, as no doubt they often have before, might render the carrying out of the projects undesirable. Those considerations would stand the test of examination according as they approached or departed from a lofty sense of responsibility for the nation's welfare. But it would at least be possible and satisfactory for us to know where and how we stood. The physician diagnoses the case and gives his advice. Though the patient does not choose to take the medicine the prescription

remains—for ever a record and a reproach. The patient in the case before us is represented by the electorate. If the advisers of the patient (the Government of the day) induce him to disregard the physician, and evil results supervene, the patient will lose confidence in his advisers and change them. It may therefore be that to let the patient see the physician's letter is not to the interest of his advisers. Whether or not that letter is to be an open one is, accordingly, the crux of the situation; because it is to be supposed that men will act in the great events of life as they do in their domestic affairs, and that they are possessed of an average amount of common-sense—but we are here trespassing on political questions, with which we soldiers have no concern or desire to involve ourselves.

That an Empire which has spread and flourished as has ours demands a different organisation for its protection than a little kingdom must, however, be apparent. The creation of such an organisation must begin with the head; the intellectual organs once in existence may themselves be trusted to form and fashion the means of executing the ideas they conceive. Narrow limitations should no longer confine the destinies that lie before us. As the years roll by, the little island in the North Sea may be overshadowed by the stature of her offspring. The mother may come to be overlooked in the presence of her stalwart sons: but her life or death will matter little while her descendants survive. When Chatham and Portsmouth fail us, Sydney and Halifax may take their place. If we can hold together for a few more decades our Empire will have spread its roots over so many lands that to uproot it would shake the stability of every neighbouring state. No single region would contain the sources of its life. No one decisive blow

could destroy heart or brain. For England and her children that element which conveys force most irresistibly and diffusively would be everywhere at work. Through water from one end of the world to the other the concentrated energies of a combined people would operate. Those energies would be exhibited in sea-power, and the same potency that called an Empire into being would intervene to save it from destruction.

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